

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Minoru Inaba, 77, former school principal and legislator

"You know, when you in the seventh grade like that, to carry one bag of coffee was quite a chore. And load three bags on a donkey and come up the trail. When it rain, the donkey would slip on the trail, fall. Had to unload the coffee, get the donkey up, load it again. I know, many times, I used to cry."

Minoru Inaba, the third of nine children, was born on February 20, 1904, in Holualoa, Kona. His parents, Hatsuyo and Zentaro Inaba, were immigrants. Minoru attended English and Japanese-language school in Holualoa. In 1925, he was one of five students in Konawaena High School's first graduating class. During his youth, he was active in kenbu, baseball and football.

Until 1925, Minoru took on many jobs--helping on the family coffee farm, doing canefield work, driving a taxi and school bus, working at a sisal mill, working at the telephone exchange, and doing postal work at Holualoa.

Later, Minoru attended the University of Hawaii, graduating with a bachelor's degree in education in 1929. In subsequent years, he served as teacher, counselor, coach, vice-principal, and principal. He retired in 1968.

After his retirement, Minoru entered politics. He was elected State Representative for the Fourth District (Kona-South Kohala). Except for 1973 and 1974, he served for 10 years until 1980. Presently, Minoru is Great Hawaiian Financial Corporation's branch manager in Holualoa.

He is a former president of the Hiroshima Kenjinkai and a member of the Kinuwai Kumi. He has three daughters and five grandchildren.

Tape No. 9-2-1-80

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Minoru Inaba (MI)

November 24, 1980

Kealahakua, Kona, Hawaii

BY: Faye Komagata (FK)

FK: This is an interview with Mr. Minoru Inaba at his home in Kealahakua. Today is November 24, 1980.

Okay, Mr. Inaba, when were you born? And can you tell me where?

MI: I was born at Holualoa on February the 20th, 1904.

FK: Would you please tell me about your family, such as your parents' names and where they were from?

MI: My father was Zentaro Inaba. That's my stepfather. My mother was Hatsuyo Inaba. Her maiden name was Hatsuyo Miyamoto. Now, my real father, when I was very young, left for the Mainland. And subsequent to that, my [step]father came to Kona and married my mother. As far as I'm concerned, I don't know my real father. Ever since my childhood, my father was Zentaro Inaba.

FK: Do you know about when Mr. Inaba came to Kona?

MI: I think they came here during the latter part of the 1890s. Mother came to Kona with my father--that is, Kitao--and my stepfather came from Papaikou to Kona. He was one of the contract laborers in Papaikou. You know, those days, because of the pressures, because of the treatment that they had in the plantation under a contract system, he was dissatisfied. So, he actually ran away from his contract and came to Kona. He used to tell me how he came to Kona. He travelled at night. He was afraid of being caught during the day. And from Papaikou to Kona, it took him three days to get to Kona. He settled in Kona. As soon as he settled in Kona, he started working for the L.S. Aungsts--Luther Aungst's family as a cook. He cooked for the family for 17 years, I think. I think it was about 17 years that he cooked for the Aungst family.

FK: Then, what was your mother doing about that time?

MI: She sewed a lot. She took orders for trousers, shirts, and the

like. Later on, she had classes in sewing for the ladies in the community.

FK: Can you tell me how many children in your family?

MI: There were nine of us. Seven boys and two girls. The oldest in my family is my sister. She's Mrs. Ikeda. Then came Albert. By the way, he was the first principal of Japanese extraction in the state. At that time, of course, it was a territory. He became principal of the Honaunau School. Then he moved to Molokai. During his latter years, he became principal of the Molokai High and Elementary School. He passed away about three years ago. Then, I'm the third in the family. Below me there are six. Now, right below me is my sister Fukumi. She was teaching at Pahala. She's retired now and living at Holualoa. Then comes Yoshio, who's an engineer. He served, at one time, for the county as a county engineer under Jimmy Kealoha, who was at that time the executive officer of the County of Hawaii. Now, the office is called the mayor's office. Then comes Norman Inaba. He's in business in Honolulu. He has a industrial loan company and also a realty business. Then, next comes Goro, who is now at Holualoa. He has a service station and runs the hotel that mother and father built back in 1926. Then comes Futoshi. He's in contracting in Hilo. Then, next comes Jimmy Inaba, who's an auditor in one of the firms in Kailua.

FK: As for your parents, what part of Japan are they from?

MI: My mother came from Hiroshima prefecture, and my father came from Fukuoka-ken.

FK: Where did you live all this time?

MI: During my childhood, I lived in Holualoa, up until I graduated high school. Then, after I came back, I stayed at Holualoa for about five years. Then, I moved to Kainaliu. Now, I'm living in Kealakekua.

FK: What kind of a house did you live in in Holualoa?

MI: Well, it's very interesting. My mother told me, when she first came to Hawaii, she lived in Holualoa above the present government road. She said she lived in a building, that is, in a structure that was stone. The walls were made of stone, and the floor was dirt. Then, later on, they moved to another building. It was one of these old structures--wooden structures. It was comfortable. Not anything elaborate, but one of these wooden buildings. I think it was comfortable for us at that time. Nothing fancy, of course.

FK: How many rooms?

MI: Oh, let's see. One, two--there were about three rooms. And a kitchen, of course. Those days, in my early childhood, I remember

there was no kerosene stove. Everything was cooked in a wooden stove. Not a stove, but one of these makeshift stoves.

FK: What about your sleeping area?

MI: Oh, sleeping, we had no beds. Slept on the floor. There was no such thing as beds. I would say, until I was probably in high school that we started sleeping in beds. But up to that time, it was all on the floor. You know, the futon.

FK: Were you in that same house for a while?

MI: Yeah, we were in that building from my birth until, I would say, till I was about 15, I think. Then, we moved to another building in Holualoa, and I stayed there all my life. That is, until I left for college in Honolulu. The second home that we stayed in is where the hotel is now--the Kona Hotel.

FK: How did your house compare with your neighbors'?

MI: Well, I think it was an average home, compared to other homes in that neighborhood.

FK: What kind of foods did you eat? Do you remember?

MI: Basically, it was rice. And then, in those days, we used to grow our own vegetables. We had pigs all the time. We had couple of pigs. We had chickens running around in the yard. Every time we wanted to eat the chicken, we'd catch one. There were no chicken coops or anything like that. They were running around in the yard there. Every time we'd kill one of the pigs. You know, those days, vegetables grew very nicely because there was no disease. I still remember, like cucumbers, melons, things of that variety, grew very well. There was no disease. We used to grow very good vegetables.

Meat, for instance. There used to be a butcher in Honokohau. I still remember his name. His name was William Keanaaina. Once a week, on Fridays, he used to deliver meat. Because there was no competition, we had to beg him for meat. I still remember, he was very friendly with my folks. So, we used to get the better part of the meat. There was no such thing as roast or steaks. It was whatever meat we bought, we stretched it making stew or cooking it with vegetables. There was no such thing as steaks for individuals, in those days.

And fish. Every so often, the peddler would come from Kailua on a donkey. He used to peddle his fish in the community. We used to buy fish from him.

FK: Who was that?

MI: He was a Chinese fella. He used to come around, and he used to call out, "'Ōpelu hō, 'ōpelu hō." Well, we knew then that this was the Chinese fella that came from Kailua. We used to buy 'ōpelus from him. Of course, once in a while, we used to go down to fish. Fish was plentiful, those days. But whenever we went fishing, we had to walk down to the beach. There was no such thing as going down on a car in those days.

FK: How long would it have taken you?

MI: Oh, used to take us about an hour to get down to the beach.

FK: By walking? Doesn't seem that long.

MI: And then, come home with whatever fish we caught. I think that was about the kinds of food we ate. I remember, we used to buy these saloon pilots by the boxes. Those days, we didn't have any butter. So, the way we ate the cracker was, we'd have a bowl. Put the cracker in the bowl, pour hot water on it, and sugar. That's how we used to eat the cracker. There was no butter. Of course, we used to have jam in those days. Guava jam. Guava jelly. Then, you know takuan--the Japanese . . .

FK: Tsukemono.

MI: . . . pickled daikons. My folks used to buy 'em by the barrel. Those days, the tsukemono used to come from Japan. There were huge daikons. Very salty. And then, rakkyō. What is rakkyō in English?

FK: Pickled scallions or something?

MI: Anyway, those, too, we used to buy 'em in barrel. They used to buy 'em in barrels. Tubs, rather.

FK: What about your own vegetables?

MI: Own vegetables, we cooked it. Then, we made tsukemono also. We had all kinds of vegetables growing. Lettuce, beans, eggplants, melons.

FK: Where did you purchase your seeds like that?

MI: Seeds, they used to come from Japan. And then, we used to grow our own seeds, too.

FK: What kind of chores did you have to do, then?

MI: When I was young, work in the vegetable garden. And feed the pig, things like that. Feed the chickens. As time went on, of course, we went out to work for the [sugar] plantation.

FK: Who did these chores?

MI: All of us had our special assignments at home.

FK: How did you feel about doing all these different chores?

MI: Well, those days, there were no attractions like baseball games, basketball, no movies. Movies, we only had it once a month when this fella by the name of Kanno used to come around. He used to have the generator on his big car, and this is how he produced electricity. And used to show movies about once a month. I still remember the serial picture that he used to bring was the Tarzan serial picture.

FK: About when was that?

MI: Oh, that was when I was a youngster. I would say about 1910. We used to look forward to the movies. Every so often, the Japanese shibai used to come around. They had a stage there in Holualoa. Where the audience sat was on a grassy lot. We used to go about, oh, 4 o'clock in the afternoon and stake out the family's portion. During the show, we used to have chicken hekka. The elderly people, the adults, used to drink sake. And we used to have a grand old time. I still remember, when I was a youngster, the day after the shibai or the show, I used to go there early in the morning to look around for money. You know, hoping that somebody dropped some money. By golly, we used to find, every so often, used to find money there.

FK: Who else went with you to do that?

MI: Oh, all the youngsters in the neighborhood. We used to go there early in the morning. The guy that went there first was the lucky one, of course.

FK: How often did they come around?

MI: Shibais, I would say, not too often. They used to come from Honolulu. I would say, maybe four or five times a year. Used to be the old, what we call, the kabuki shibai.

FK: Do you know about how much it cost?

MI: Oh, gee, I don't recall. Was very minimal.

FK: How did they travel around?

MI: Well, those days, we had cars there, 1910.

FK: Was it only Holualoa?

MI: No. Used to be Holualoa, Kealakekua, Honaunau. Honaunau used to be a thriving community. There were a lot of Japanese people in Honaunau. Those were the three places that usually they performed.

Honaunau, Kealakekua, and in Holualoa.

FK: Since we were onto that recreation part, maybe we can go a little further. You had mentioned kenbu at one time.

MI: Right. When I was a youngster--I must have been in the sixth grade. Around about the sixth grade. You know, those days, whatever entertainment had to be provided by the local people, because there were very few of these people coming from outside. Transportation was a problem. Whenever they had a celebration, the local people would get together. They put on shibais like that. When I was around six years old, there was, at the Japanese temple, classes in kenbu, that is, the sword dance. I recall going there for about Four years, I think, I learned kenbu. The teacher was a man by the name of Shee, I forgot his name now. Anyway, he taught us kenbu. So, every time they would be a celebration in Holualoa, or Kainaliu, or Kealakekua, they'd invite us to come and perform. I remember going from Holualoa to Kainaliu, Kealakekua.

I still remember when the merchant marine from Japan, like the Taisei-maru used to come in, they used to ask us to go down to perform. There used to be an old building in Kailua--the American Factors building. It had a very wide veranda--porch. That used to be the stage. Every time we'd perform I used to look forward, because, those days, if you did well, they would throw money on the stage. Fifty cents, 25 cents. (Chuckles) After you perform, shee, you look around on the floor, pick up whatever money there was. This was really very exciting.

FK: How many of you were there?

MI: In the class, there must have been a good 30 of us youngsters learning. But I must have been the better performer, I think, because I was always asked to come and perform.

(Laughter)

FK: What about the equipment?

MI: Well, we used to have hakama [divided skirt for men's formal wear]. The--what do you call the top? And then, the tasuki. Then, hachimaki, and then the sword. Of course, certain performance, you needed a fan, the sensu.

FK: What kind of sword was that?

MI: These were not the real sword that was used but more for performance sword.

FK: Did you have to buy your own equipment?

MI: Yeah, we had to buy our own.

FK: Must have been expensive in those days.

MI: No, I don't think so. Because I know mother used to sew my hakama and my top, so it was just cost of the material.

FK: There wasn't an armor type of thing? It was not like kendō, then, where you have to cover . . .

MI: No, no, no. No, no, no. It wasn't kendō.

FK: How about your music?

MI: Music, the kenbu, it's just they'd sing. According to the song, you'd perform. You'd act. You know, each one had its meaning. Like, for instance, there used to be one on Saigo Takamori, who revolted against the government and finally he had to go seppuku--harakiri, yeah? They call it "shigin." The singer would shigin-- sing the song. And you would act according to that.

FK: What other activities did you participate in?

MI: Oh, when we were youngsters, we used to go down to the beach quite often. Go in the morning on weekends. Go to the beach. Swim at the beach and come back. We used to go to Kailua.

FK: Who took you?

MI: We walked down. Oh, yes. It was all walking. We also went to the Holualoa Beach to swim. I still remember, when we went to Kailua, for instance, we used to buy bread for ten cents. They'd split the bread open, and butter the bread, and put some jam in it. This was for ten cents. There used to be a restaurant down there. Of course, there were several restaurants, but the restaurant we used to go to--I still remember--for 35 cents, they used to serve us sardines, and rice, and onions. Shee, we thought at that time this was some treat. You know, go into the restaurant, paying 35 cents for lunch. That was something.

FK: Did you go as a family or did you go as a . . .

MI: No, we went as youngsters. Boys getting together, going out. Because, like now, they have cars, the family can go down. But in those days, if the family went, the whole family had to walk. So, we got together. Boys used to get together and go down on the weekends.

FK: You said you liked fishing. In those days, were you able to go fishing?

MI: Yeah. We used to go down camping every so often. We used to take

the net and fish. We used to catch quite a bit. The fish was plentiful, those days.

FK: When you went camping, was that just one family, or did you go . . .

MI: No, the boys. Group of boys used to go camping.

FK: Oh, the boys? Even camping?

MI: Right, right. Not families. I suppose there were families that used to go as a family, but in my case, my family, we never went as a family. I think that was because they were working and all of that, so.

FK: You had also mentioned baseball and football when you were young?

MI: Yes. When I went to high school, we played football; we played baseball; we had track. There was no basketball because we didn't have any gym in those days. But I remember, the first time I ever saw a football was when I went to high school. Never saw a football before then. Of course, we played baseball before I went to high school. But football, we never participated in football until I got into high school.

FK: As part of, maybe, recreation, what kind of celebration or festivities as a community do you still remember?

MI: Well, there was always a New Year's, Christmas, and the Japanese used to have the emperor's birthday--Tenchō-setsu. And the Fourth of July, we used to have. And then, 11 June, of course, used to be a holiday. Those were about the only holidays that I remember.

In those days, New Year's, for instance, was quite an occasion. Traditionally, they followed the old customs from Japan. For instance, on New Year's morning, we had to take a bath first thing in the morning. The girls could not go out into the community for three days. They were not supposed to be seen by males. On New Year's Day, we used to go from house to house, pay our compliments to the neighbors. Of course, they used to have food--and sake, of course.

FK: Who would go house to house?

MI: Oh, all the people. For instance, I would go to my neighbors; they would come to my home. My parents used to go to the neighbors--their friends' home--and they used to come. We always had food. You know, the New Year's food. Then, we never swept the house or the yard on New Year's Day. And then, couple nights before New Year's, the community used to get together. Our family used to get together with several families, and we used to pound mochi as a group. It was quite a celebration. Of course, my parents, being Orientals, they didn't observe Christmas too much, but the churches

used to have their program, so we used to go to the programs. There was no such thing as parents giving gifts to the children Christmas time. At least, not my family when we were youngsters.

FK: You mentioned sumō.

MI: Oh, yes. They used to have sumō. Every time there used to be a celebration, they used to have sumō. The temples--the Japanese churches--used to have observations every so often. When they did have observations, they used to have sumō. That was quite an affair.

FK: You also mentioned the Shingon shū. On the 20th (laughs) of the month

MI: Yeah, when we were youngsters, there used to be a very elderly person by the name of Mr. Taketa, who used to have the Odai-san. He used to be the priest there. I don't think he was an ordained priest, but anyway, he was very religious. Every 20th, they used to have services, and we knew that he used to have refreshments. So, we made it a point to go to his church on the 20th because there was always food there. We used to look forward to Mr. Taketa's 20th observation.

FK: During the New Year's, was karuta played at all?

MI: Yes. I never played karuta, but I know the young people--girls used to play karuta a lot. I think they used to have tournaments. Used to come from South Kona, Holualoa. Different church groups used to have their own teams. They used to have tournaments every so often.

FK: How about hanami?

MI: You know, because coffee was the basic industry in those days, much of the land was planted in coffee, of course. As of now, much of the land has been abandoned. But in those days, coffee was the basic industry in Kona. When the coffee blossoms bloomed, you know how it is. They look like snow on the trees. They used to have celebration. What they used to call hanami--that is observing the blossoms. The families used to get together and they used to celebrate. This year, this family would have the observation; next year, the next family; and so on. They used to rotate it. And it was quite an occasion.

FK: How was it celebrated?

MI: Well, the food was the main thing. And the sake, of course, for the elderly people--the adults. They used to sing. You know, parties in those days used to last the whole night. Like nowadays, you go to a wedding party from 6 [o'clock p.m.]. Maybe about 9 o'clock, you're through. But in the olden days, they used to do

their own cooking. Families used to get together. Ladies used to get together, help cook. And the parties went on for the whole night.

FK: What did the children do?

MI: Oh, the children hung around there, stuck around, and they did their own, I guess, things.

FK: While you were living in Holualoa, can you tell me about your schooling there?

MI: Yes. At Holualoa, the Holualoa School, there was no kindergarten in those days. It was first grade to the eighth grade. We used to do quite a bit of gardening, those days. Used to have the regular classes, of course.

FK: You mean gardening was a subject?

MI: Yeah, it was one of the subjects. The Star-Bulletin offered prizes for the school that had the best garden. I recall Holualoa School used to take first place quite often. We used to sell the vegetables. We used to peddle the vegetables in the community. Raise funds for different activities, for purchasing fertilizer, and the like. I remember, near Holualoa School, there used to be a stable. We had to go to the stable, and collect the manure, and fertilize the vegetables with organic manure.

FK: Who was teaching this class or course?

MI: Well, most of them are gone, now. The first principal I remember was a lady by the name of Mrs. Scott. Then subsequent to that, there was a Mr. Pavao, principal of the school. Mr. Kamakau. And there were the teachers. Mrs. Yanagi, who passed away several years ago, lived in Kahaluu. She was one of the teachers there. Mrs. De Guair, who was Miss Kamau, taught at Holualoa School. Then she later became principal of Napoopoo School. Of course, they are deceased now.

FK: You started school around 1910. You started from first grade?

MI: First grade.

FK: And how long did you go to

MI: Holualoa School? Eight years.

FK: What were your favorite subjects?

MI: Shee, I don't think I had any favorite subjects. I didn't care for school very much when I was a youngster. (Laughs)

FK: Then, what did you like the least that might have kept you from school?

MI: The subject I didn't like was arithmetic.

FK: What time did school start?

MI: School started at 8 o'clock [a.m.]. And I think we ended about 2:30 [p.m.].

FK: How about your lunch?

MI: We had to take our own lunch to school. There was no cafeteria. So, we had to take our own lunch. I don't think any of the elementary schools in those days had cafeterias, so the only time that I remember being served lunch was at Konawaena High School. They had the cafeteria there, and they served lunch. But aside from that, the elementary schools, the children had to take their own lunches.

FK: What type of lunch did you take?

MI: Oh, riceballs. But I lived near the school. So, for lunch, I got excuse from the principal, and I walked home. It was a short distance to school, so I used to go home for lunch. But the other children brought their own lunch from home.

FK: Did you go to Japanese [language] school?

MI: Yes, I went to Japanese school. In those days, for the lower classes, they used to have afternoon classes. But for the upper grades, they used to have what they call morning sessions. I think I went up to the ninth grade. But if you ask me now to read anything in Japanese, I just can't, because I never kept up with it.

FK: You told me one of the reasons why you didn't (laughs).

MI: Well, you know, when I was a youngster, I didn't care for school very much. Even the Japanese school. It was more memory work. Although I recall, now, I think it has helped me a lot in my growing up. That was the shūshin. I think, in English, you'd call it civics courses. I think our present schools should have courses in civics. You know, where you learn etiquette, proper manners, proper attitudes, respect for others. All of these kind of things are not taught enough in our present-day schools. In those days, this was a required subject.

FK: Are you talking about Japanese school?

MI: Both Japanese and English. Oh, yes.

FK: How large was the Japanese school? What was the name of it, too?

- MI: Holualoa Japanese School. Let's see, I would say, offhand, there must have been about 150 youngsters in that school.
- FK: Do you notice any increase in number of students or decrease as you were growing up?
- MI: No, there were normal, steady number of youngsters in school. Of course, when the Second World War started, schools were abandoned. Up until then, there were quite a few youngsters of Japanese ancestry going to Japanese language school.
- FK: I was just wondering, you said you played hooky a lot. Why did your parents continue to send you? (Laughs)
- MI: Well, they didn't know. They didn't know I was playing hooky. (Laughs) As I said, I didn't care for Japanese school. As I think about it now, I regret that I didn't study and get the most out of the school, because it's certainly helpful in your adult life.
- FK: You said you rested from school for two years. So, when did you go back to school after the eighth grade?
- MI: After I graduated from the eighth grade, I went to work for two years. You see, those days, if a youngster, after leaving eighth grade, wanted to go on to high school, he had to either go to Hilo or to Honolulu. There was no high school here. Our Konawaena High School started in 1921. After the eighth grade, I went to work for two years. Then, when Konawaena School opened, I felt that I should go back to school, so I attended Konawaena High School. So, actually, I was about two and a half years older than the average student in high school.

One reason why I had to go to work was because my brother was going to school in Honolulu. You know, those days, we had to help the parents to send brothers to school. So, I stayed out for two years. When Konawaena High School opened, I got a job at the telephone exchange in Holualoa. I worked there at nights and went to school during the day. Also, at the same building where the telephone exchange was used to be the post office. So, on weekends, I used to work in the post office. Then, during the day, I used to drive the school bus. Used to go up to Kalaoa, and pick up the students from Kalaoa all the way, and brought 'em to school. Then, in the afternoon, I used to drive 'em back to Kalaoa. And then, come back, park the bus, and started working in the telephone exchange at night.

- FK: How did you get these jobs?
- MI: Oh, asking. Inquiring. And through friends.
- FK: How were you paid for these different jobs?

MI: I remember the telephone exchange used to pay me \$60 a month. The post office used to pay about, oh, \$20, \$25. I used to get \$30 from driving the school bus. So, while going to school, I think I made pretty good income in those days.

FK: Compared to other people . . .

MI: Oh, yes, oh, yes. I made good money. And at the same time, I went to high school. In fact, after I graduated from high school and went to Honolulu, I worked my way through college . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

FK: Okay. Mr. Inaba, you said you started working when you were quite young. What was your first job that you recall?

MI: First job, I think, was working for the plantation. In those days, there used to be the Kona Development Company, a sugar plantation. It was capitalized from Japan. The plantation area covered from North Kona--from Holualoa, all the way to Kealahou--Konawaena. They had spot acreages here and there. Wherever there was a good piece of land or level land, they used to have cane fields. As I said, it spread from Holualoa all the way to South Kona. The last field was right below Konawaena. Where the present Konawaena School is used to be cane land.

On the lower section, below the highway, there used to be a railroad track. The railroad track ran from Holualoa all the way to Konawaena. What they used to do was cable the cane from the fields down to the railroad track. The railroad cars used to haul the cane all the way to Holualoa. The mill was located below Holualoa, on the way to Kailua.

During the summer months, we used to go and work in the cane fields. We used to hoe the grass between the rows of cane. I did this for about two years. I remember, we used to be paid 35 cents a day. Then, after two years--the third summer--I got a job in the sugar mill. I worked there for 60 cents a day. I thought this was quite a promotion.

FK: When you were working for the plantation, who paid you?

MI: The plantation. The name of the company was Kona Development Company.

FK: Oh, that means you were not on contract?

MI: No, no, no. This was by day.

FK: How old were you at that time?

MI: Oh, I must have been in the sixth grade. So, about 12 years old. In those days, there was no such thing as child labor laws here. So, we're able to work.

FK: How many hours a day?

MI: Eight hours. Regular eight-hour day.

FK: How were the working conditions when you were working over there?

MI: Well, we started early in the morning, 6 o'clock, put in our eight hours and used to come home. There was always a luna, we used to call him--a foreman. We used to call him the luna. We sure worked hard. There was no such thing as goofing off. Same thing in the sugar mill. You had to keep up with the mill work, so you couldn't goof off. You had to just keep up.

FK: What about your breaks?

MI: There was no break, in those days. You started, and there was only the lunch break. One-hour lunch break. There was no such thing as coffee hour those days, you know. (Chuckles) There were quite a few youngsters. We went to work together. We had to provide our own tools. We had to take our own hoes.

FK: What area did you work in hō hana? Like, what part of . . .

MI: Oh, in Holualoa. Used to be cane fields in Holualoa, here and there. We used to go from place to place, wherever they assigned us.

FK: How did you go and how were you assigned?

MI: We walked to the fields in the morning and walked back. The only thing they provided was, I recall, water. They brought water for us. We had to take our own meals, of course. Our own lunch.

FK: When you said they provided water, you said you couldn't take any breaks, so. . . .

MI: Well, they allowed us to, you know, whenever we wanted to drink water.

FK: When you were at the sugar mill, what were you doing there?

MI: I worked in what they called the "cane carry." When they brought the cane down, the cane used to go into the mill. This is where I worked. You know, when they dumped the cane onto the conveyor, sometimes the cane would drop off of the conveyor. I used to pick those up and throw 'em back into the conveyor. That was my job.

FK: How dangerous was that?

MI: It wasn't dangerous. It was picking up canes, throwing it into the conveyor.

FK: Who else did that with you?

MI: Well, there weren't too many youngsters working in those days, so I recall I was very happy when I got the job. The mill used to be about halfway down the Hualalai Road to Kailua. I remember, I used to go down on the donkey. Go to work, and then come back on the donkey.

FK: How old were you then?

MI: I was about 12 years old.

FK: This was . . .

MI: Well, I would say, about--because I worked two years--15 years old, I guess.

FK: How did you like this job as compared with the hō hana?

MI: Oh, that [mill work] was much better. Of course, I thought it was a promotion. And the pay itself was much better. It wasn't as hard as hō hana.

FK: How many hours did you work?

MI: Eight hours. Eight hours a day.

FK: How competitive was your job, though?

MI: I think there were others who wanted to work, too, but I forgot now who got me the job. But it was through somebody's recommendation and somebody's influence that I got the job.

FK: What did you do with your money?

MI: Oh, every cent I earned, I brought back to my parents. Even when I worked in high school, whatever I earned, I turned it over to my parents. And then, whatever I needed for petty cash, they used to let me have. I used to ask 'em for money whenever I needed. When we were youngsters, the only time that we got money--that is, before high school--was New Year's and Christmas. I remember, we used to get about half a dollar for Christmas and New Year's. We thought this was quite a sum of money. You know, in those days.

FK: What did you do with that?

MI: Well, we bought whatever we wanted. (Laughs) I remember, when New

Year's came, fifty cents, we used to buy cigarettes. And lots of time, fireworks. We used to buy fireworks with that.

FK: What did you do with the cigarettes (laughs)?

MI: We smoked them, of course. Those days, I remember, there was a brand called Omar. Omar and Fatima. Omar and Fatima were the best cigarettes in those days. Oh, this was quite a treat, compared to Bull Durham, roll your own. We used to roll our own, too. I started smoking from an early age. And I'm still smoking. So, I've been smoking for the last 65 years. And I'm still a chain smoker.

FK: But it's supposed to be bad for your health.

MI: I know it's bad for me. Well, I guess that's one of my vices. (Laughs)

FK: When you were working on plantation during the summers, you said your family also had coffee land and [a] taxi [business] from about 1915

MI: No, the coffee land came little later, I think. We used to have 14 acres of land--coffee field. I remember working in the coffee fields during vacation. After school, I used to go down. This was during my elementary school year. Those days, there was no jeep. We used to haul our coffee on a donkey. I remember loading the coffee bags onto the donkey. You know, when you are in the seventh grade like that, to carry one bag of coffee was quite a chore. And load three bags on a donkey and come up the trail. When it rained, the donkey would slip on the trail, fall. Had to unload the coffee, get the donkey up, load it again. I know, many times, I used to cry.

FK: Who helped you

MI: My sister and my brother--three of us--used to go down. And then, we used to hire people, too. Parents used to hire people. My father never worked on the farm; my mother never worked on the farm. So, we did. And then, they hired. Those days, there was no such thing as poisoning the grass, like they do now. The grass had to be controlled by hoeing. My father used to hire people to hoe the coffee land.

FK: How did he learn about how to take care of the land, though? You said he wasn't

MI: From other farmers, I guess. Our coffee land wasn't a good coffee land, because, as I said, my parents were not. . . . Others who had farms, the family worked on the farm. The parents--father, mother--worked on the farms. But in our case, both of them didn't work on the farm, so it was mostly through hired labor.

FK: About how many people did you hire?

MI: Oh, it depended on the need at that time. For instance, in hoeing, I remember, he used to hire a Puerto Rican family, a couple of them, to hoe the coffee land. And then, during picking season, harvesting season, he used to hire people to come and pick. Not too many.

FK: Were they families or just individuals?

MI: Individuals. Used to hire, and they used to come and pick. Of course, when you say "individuals," adults would come, but they'd bring their children.

FK: So, you had your coffee land from about 1915?

MI: [Nineteen] sixteen. . . . I would say, the parents must have had the farm for about five, six years, I think. Those days, there was no such thing as grinding the coffee with electric motor or gas engines. We used to do it by hand. Used to grind the coffee. We picked coffee during the day, and then in the late afternoon, grind the coffee so that it could be dried the following morning. In those days, we used to have a coffee platform. We'd spread the coffee out on the platform, and if it looked like rain, we had to push the coffee up to the edge of the platform and cover it with galvanized iron. Then, later on, somebody thought of an idea where the platform would be covered by a moving contraption, where you could move the whole roof on a track. When it rained, you just push it back. When it was sunny, you'd push it out so that the coffee would dry.

I remember, there was a YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] man called Johnny Young, who came to Kona one day and asked me to drive him around. So, I took him around, drove him around. This was lately, after I got out of college. As I was driving him around, he told me, "Say, I wonder if something's wrong with me? Because I saw a house moving."

So I said, "Well, that's the coffee platform--the roofing of the platform. It's moved on tracks, so you must have seen that."

He said, "Oh, no wonder. I thought something was wrong with me, because I definitely saw this house moving."

FK: Where did you send your coffee?

MI: There used to be a store down in Kailua--a wholesale store in Kailua--called American Factors. No, excuse me. Hackfeld. Later, it became American Factors. The American Factors used to be a wholesaler in Kona, and they used to buy the coffee from the farmers. They used to ship it out. You know, in those days, you could get credit with the American Factors for the whole year and

pay them back in coffee. So, many of the farmers had credit with the American Factors. They bought their merchandise from American Factors, or they sold it to the store up ma uka. American Factors used to be in Kailua.

And the general merchandise stores along the highway used to buy the coffee from the farmers. In turn, they got credit from American Factors for their merchandise and carried the farmers for the year. And at the end of the year, the farmers would pay. Instead of paying the store by cash, they would pay them in coffee. I recall the American Factors used to hire a man to go around and check on the coffee farmers and see if whether they would sell their coffee to other people, instead of paying the merchants with their coffee. Because lot of them used to---I wouldn't say "lot," but some of them used to sneak their coffee out to some other outlet.

FK: This was for cash?

MI: For their cash.

FK: On your own coffee land, then, you sold yours directly to AmFac?

MI: To a store. We sold it to a store.

FK: Oh, to the store?

MI: Right. And we got the year's credit from that store.

FK: Would you know how much coffee you were able to . . .

MI: Shee, offhand, I wouldn't know what the volume of the production was, but it was much more than what it is now. Because the acreage was much more.

FK: Fourteen acres.

MI: Oh, yes, oh, yes. Because, as I said, there was no other industry in Kona except coffee farming, and the sugar plantation, for a while. And of course, ranching, they had from way back. There was no tourism. No other businesses except coffee farming in Kona.

FK: Your father was a cook, and he had other work to do. So, who was doing the processing of the coffee?

MI: The whole family would come in and do it. Father used to come back, and he used to help, too. And we used to do it.

FK: Your 14 acres, was that lease land or owned land?

MI: Lease land. Yes, all of that was lease land.

FK: Who did you lease it from?

MI: Shee, I don't know who we leased it from, but it was three separate lands. Altogether, 14 acres. As I said, it wasn't a good field, compared to others, who devoted their whole--the family--devoted their whole time on coffee farming. So, the yield, the production, was not as good as many other coffee farms in the neighborhood.

FK: Where did you do your processing?

MI: At home at Holualoa.

FK: Oh, I see. You brought it from your coffee land?

MI: Right. From the field, home. You see, our home was not in the field. Many of the farmers had their homes in the field on their farms. So, ours was not. Our fields were away from home.

FK: Did your father buy all the equipment or. . . .

MI: Uh huh [yes]. Right.

FK: Just for this . . .

MI: Farm. Yes, yes, yes. You know, those were the days when my father used to run a taxi. As I said, there was no electrical motor, no gasoline engine in those days. There were a few gasoline engines that they attached with a pulley to the coffee grinder. So, what father did was, from the garage, he jacked up the car, and he used the automobile to grind the coffee, but I recall it was quite a distance from the garage to the coffee grinder. And every so often, that belt would slip off. We'd go back and do it again. Used to be a real chore.

FK: Kind of frustrating, I would think.

MI: Yeah. So, finally, we gave up, and we did it by hand.

FK: As far as your taxi is concerned, then, how long was he in that business?

MI: I think father started the taxi about 1915. And in 1925, I think, we still had it. So, about ten years he ran the taxi. I still remember, the first Ford car, Model-T, he got was one of these brass radiators. The lights were carbide. There was no battery lights, those days. So, at night, we used to take the match and light the headlights. It was carbide.

FK: How was the taxi business?

MI: Oh, was not too good. So, mother used to always tell father, "Give up the taxi business." But I guess, there was a certain amount of pride, and he carried on for ten years. But it wasn't a paying proposition.

FK: But you said you also even had two cars at one time?

MI: Yeah. We had two Ford cars--two taxis. On steamer days---those days, the steamer used to come into Kailua once a week. Usually, it was on Fridays. We used to go down to Kailua to the pier--to the wharf there--and look for passengers. I remember, when I was a youngster, there were other taxis there, too. You know, there was quite a bit of competition. Each one trying to get passengers off of the ship. I remember coming home many times without any passengers because, being a youngster, you kinda hold back, huh? And others would be more aggressive.

FK: How old were you?

MI: I must have been about 15 years old then.

FK: You were driving already?

MI: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. Those days, you know, there was no such thing as age.

FK: When you were ready, did you have to take a test or anything? Driving test?

MI: No, I think it was just applying for license. The policeman would say okay, and you'd get a license. There was no such thing as examination.

FK: How did you get to Kailua, then, with your car?

MI: We used to go down the Hualalai Road. You know, that's the middle Kailua Road.

FK: Was it very different from now?

MI: No. It was all right. The road wasn't too bad. In those days, lot of the roads--for instance, around the island--used to be dirt road. Going to Waimea, many of the sections, where the Puuwaawaa section is, for instance, you'd have only two lanes for the track there. And in the center, you'd see grass growing. Yeah, it used to be that way.

In those days, the fastest you could go was about 35 miles [an hour] on a Model-T. We used to boast about, "Oh, my car hit 35 miles the other day in Kainaliu." Kainaliu used to have pretty good roads those days, compared to elsewhere. And we'd say, "Oh, my car went 35 miles." We could boast about it.

FK: What kind of roads were they? The surface?

MI: Oh, dirt road, gravel roads.

FK: What kind of passengers did you have?

MI: Oh, people going from here to Honolulu and coming back. We'd pick 'em up. As I said, there used to be an old sugar mill. You know, the Kona Development Company. Where the sugar mill was, there used to have a camp there. Every so often, those people would want to come up to Holualoa, because there was no store down there. No barbershops, no places where they could shop. So, they used to call us. We used to go down and pick 'em up, and bring 'em up. Then, people moving from Holualoa to Kealahou, you know. Those were the passengers.

FK: "Moving"?

MI: No, no. I mean, travelling.

FK: How did you charge?

MI: Shee, I forgot now, how much we used to charge. But nothing like today, of course.

FK: You would have had to carry change, then, with you?

MI: [MI misinterprets question.] Right. When we used to go Waimea every so often, we had to carry chains because in Waimea, especially in the Keamuku area, there's so much dirt there. If it rained, we had to carry chains. Oh, yeah.

FK: Did you ever spend your night over sometime?

MI: Right. I recall spending. We used to take the films, every so often. Take the movie films from Kona to Waimea. Oh, I remember going there. . . . And get stuck in the mud. When it rained, push the car out of the mud. Used to be quite a drive to Waimea.

FK: How long would it have taken you?

MI: Oh, must have taken us about four hours to get to Waimea.

FK: Did you enjoy driving?

MI: Oh, I used to enjoy driving.

FK: As compared with other boys your age, were they driving, too?

MI: There used to be one boy. Another boy. One of the Otas used to have a taxi, too.

FK: Which Ota is that?

MI: That's the one in Holualoa. Kenso Ota. He used to drive too when he was young. Aside from that, hardly anybody else.

FK: So, that was unusual, then, you would say?

MI: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Because there were not too many cars.

FK: How often did you have to drive the taxi?

MI: Not too often. But every so often, when the two chauffeurs would be sick, or they'd go on a leave, or anything like that. When they couldn't go, I used to drive.

FK: These were people who were hired?

MI: Right, right.

FK: Who did your father hire, then?

MI: He hired a man by the name of Matsuo. The family is not here anymore. And then, another one is Jose--John Jose. His wife is still in Holualoa, and his daughters are still in Holualoa. And the sons are still in Holualoa. The Jose family.

FK: What is the farthest that you had to drive?

MI: Farthest I had to drive was to Waimea.

FK: How far this side, towards Kealakekua, did you have to drive?

MI: Oh, I would say until Hookena, Kealia, that area there. I never drove to Hilo. Or beyond that.

FK: Your passengers, were they mostly a certain ethnic group? Or was it just anybody?

MI: Anybody, anybody. But, you know, Kona in those days, there were quite a few Chinese. There were Portuguese. And mostly, there were Japanese. Because, as I said, the basic industry was coffee, and most of it was raised by the Japanese. So, most of the people were Japanese people. As I recall, in the sugar mill, sugar plantation, most of them were Japanese, too.

FK: Did you ever get tips?

MI: Yeah, every so often. Every so often, tips.

FK: You were still driving taxi right through, but you also got a job at the sisal mill?

MI: Yeah. I got the job at the sisal mill after I graduated from the eighth grade. My father used to be the foreman at the sisal mill. So, I got a job there. I used to get up, 3 o'clock in the morning, get on a donkey from Holualoa, go all the way to Keopu, and go down the trail. You see, the sisal mill used to be on Palani Road.

It's little below where the Liliuokalani Housing is. Used to take me three hours to get to the sisal mill every morning. I used to get up 3 o'clock in the morning--well, before 3 o'clock, and leave home at 3 o'clock. Get to the sisal mill at 6 o'clock, work there the whole day, then come back. So, I used to get home about 7 o'clock at night daily.

I did this for about a year, I think. Then, my father said, "Let's camp down at the mill." There was a warehouse down there, and we stayed in the warehouse, father and I. And weekends, we used to come home. But for about a year, I commuted to the mill, back and forth.

FK: When you commuted, did your father go with you?

MI: No, he was down there. But I wanted to come home because I didn't want to stay down there. And I had friends [at Holualoa], so. . . .

FK: I see. What kind of job was it?

MI: It was throwing the thrash. The thrash from the sisal, if it gets on you, it's very annoying. It itches. I had to wear long-sleeves and gloves, and I used to cover my face with a . . .

FK: The upper part of your face?

MI: Right, right. Except my eyes open. Because once that thing gets on your skin, it's very irritating. I had to haul in a wheelbarrow all the thrash that came out of the sisal. And haul it away from the mill, dump it on the ma kai side of the road. You couldn't loaf on the job. Because if you'd loaf, it'd pile up, accumulates, and you'd have a hard time. So, it had to be continuously working. It was a pretty good-paying job.

FK: How much?

MI: I think I got paid \$2.50. That was, I think, one of the better paying jobs in the mill. Because nobody wanted to take it. So, I took the job.

FK: That was per day?

MI: Per day. And that was considered good pay at that time. I did that for--as I said--about two years. And that's when I figured, "Shee, I better go back to school. This is not for me. This kind of life is not for me." Fortunately, just about that time, Konawaena School opened. In 1922.

FK: [Nineteen] twenty-one, '22. Konawaena School. Can you describe the operation of the mill, as you recall?

MI: You see, the sisal, they gave up the operations there because it

was too costly. The operation, of course, was too high. What they used to do was to thrash the sisal. You take the green leaves, and at the tip there's always a spine, huh? So, they had to cut the tip off, and then, cut the leaf off--the sisal leaf. And then, they'd put it on a conveyor.

FK: The leaf?

MI: Yeah, the leaf. That leaf is really thick, you know, and much of it is moisture and thrash in there. So, this machine would thrash that leaf and leave only the fibers. The thrash that used to come out of the leaves is what I used to haul away. After the liquid and thrash was cleaned out, it left only the fibers. This was what they made rope out of. Sisal. They had to dry this out in the sun. After it was thoroughly dried--the fibers were dried--they'd bring it in, and they'd compress it into bales. They used to ship it to San Francisco. But the cost of bringing out the sisal from the field. . . . They used to pack it, and those things were heavy. You know, to bring it out in a rocky terrain, they used to bring it out on the donkeys. Load 'em up on the donkeys and bring 'em out. This was the costly part of their operation, so finally, they had to give up.

FK: Who did all this work?

MI: Oh, hired people. The sisal mill was run by Mr. Aungst, the man that owned the telephone company. Mr. Aungst was quite a pioneer. In Holualoa, he started the first garage. He was the first one that had a radio. He was the first one that brought in the carbide lights--you know, gas lamps for the home. He was the first one that imported the flashlight. He was the first one that brought in ice from Honolulu. There was no ice factory here, so every steamer day, the ship would bring in ice, and they'd bring it up to his home. He was the only one that had ice. Oh, he was quite a pioneer. And he started the soda works there. He started the telephone company. The old soda works used to be the Kona Bottling Works. Yes, he was quite a pioneer.

FK: Is that how you were involved somehow . . .

MI: Right, right. In the soda works.

FK: What did you used to do?

MI: Oh, no, I wasn't involved in any work in the soda works. But the man that used to operate the soda works used to be a family friend. So, when I was a youngster, he used to deliver the soda on the wagon. I used to go along with him. I recall, we'd leave early in the morning. We'd go all the way down to Keokea Junction. You know where Morihara Store is? We'd go as far as there, deliver the soda, and come back. Collect the empty bottles and come back. Used to be at night we'd reach home. Used to be a whole day affair.

FK: This is when you were . . .

MI: Young. Where I had no particular work or anything like that.

FK: At the sisal mill, were there others your age working?

MI: No, no, no, no, no. They were all adults.

FK: After you quit working there, you went back to Konawaena School?
And this was about 19 . . .

MI: [Nineteen] twenty-one, 1921. I went back to school. And at the same time, Mr. Aungst gave me a job. You see, he operated a sisal mill, too. My father was his cook, also, for many years. Then he [MI's father] moved to the sisal mill. So, he [Mr. Aungst] gave me a job at the telephone company as a night operator. Well, those days, the telephone company was a separate telephone company. Mr. Aungst had ownership of the telephone company. The telephone company ran from Keamuku, that's near Waimea, and all the way to the Volcano House. He had this telephone system. Later on, he sold it to the Hawaiian Telephone Company. No, in those days, they used to call it the Mutual Telephone Company. He sold his business to the telephone company. But in 1921, prior to that, he owned it.

So, I started working there in 1921, when I started high school. I worked for four years for the telephone company. Those days, the telephone exchange wasn't open all night. At 9 o'clock, we could go to sleep. But we had on the switchboard, a night alarm. Anytime somebody would call after 9 o'clock, this alarm would ring in the bedroom, and I'd get up and answer the phone. It was understood by the subscribers that the telephone company closes at 9 o'clock, but in case of emergencies, they could call. So, I set the alarm at 9 o'clock, go to bed at 9 o'clock. If there's any call, I'd get up and answer the calls, connect them up.

FK: Was this just a weekday job or. . . .

MI: Every day, every day.

FK: Of the week?

MI: Every day of the week. At night. Night shift. Saturdays, Sundays.

FK: So, during this time, did you live at home at all?

MI: At home, right.

FK: But this is at the telephone exchange, though?

MI: Right, right. At night I would go there.

FK: Oh, in the daytime, you went to . . .

MI: School.

FK: What about your own home, though? You were out of it, then?

MI: Yeah. I used to go from 5 o'clock [p.m.] until 5 o'clock next morning. The other person who took the day shift came at 5 o'clock. Then, 5 o'clock, I'd leave the telephone exchange, go home, have breakfast, and then drive the bus up to Kalaoa, pick up the students, and go all the way to Konawaena School. After school, drive the bus, take 'em up to Kalaoa, come back, and then 5 o'clock, I used to go to the telephone office.

FK: How did you get your school bus job?

MI: The owner of the buses was a policeman. Mr. Amarino. He used to be a policeman. Well, he was looking around for somebody to drive, so I said, "Well, I take it." And I drove.

FK: This telephone company, how many calls did you get a night?

MI: A day? Well, shee, offhand, not too many. You see, in those days, if you made a call from Holualoa, North Kona to South Kona, you had to pay a toll. And we had to keep track. Every call that was made from Holualoa. Like North Kona to South Kona or South Kona to Holualoa, we had to keep track of that and send 'em a bill at the end of the month.

FK: Oh, so you knew who was calling?

MI: Oh, yes. You had to know who. And then, you had to know by voice who were in a family, especially father and mother. Because children, sometimes, you don't know, but father and mother. So, you know by their voices, and you charge them. If you didn't know, you had to ask 'em who's speaking, and what telephone, and so on.

In those days, there was no such thing as a private line. You had about eight people on one line. So, they'd identify the calls by the ring. For instance, two short, one long; or three shorts; or one long and two shorts. You know, one long ring and two shorts. Or whatever. In that way, they'd answer their calls.

FK: It was not a dialing system, then?

MI: No, no. Definitely not, definitely not. So, you had to turn the crank. Crank it up.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 9-37-2-80

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Minoru Inaba (MI)

December 23, 1980

Kealahou, Kona, Hawaii

BY: Faye Komagata (FK)

FK: This is an interview with Mr. Minoru Inaba at his home in Kealahou. Today's date is December 23, 1980.

Mr. Inaba, last time, we were talking about the telephone company where, I understand, you worked from 1921 to 1925. How were the calls handled?

MI: Well, in those days, there was no dial system. So, in order to call what we used to call the central--that is, where they called in for the connection--they had to turn the crank on their individual telephones. To call central, they had to ring twice. And whenever a call came in, we plugged into the specific line and answered the call. They'd ask for a certain party. Then, we would connect it. And then, each home, each telephone in other words, had a specific ring. That is, either two short and one long, or one long and two short, or three shorts, or whatever. Because there were many people on one line--as many as eight people on one line. So, we had to go by signals--that is, two long; two short, one long; or whatever. And when that number rang, then you'd answer the call.

FK: How about at night? What was your volume?

MI: At night, there weren't too much, because they knew that the central closed at 9 [o'clock]. But in case of emergencies, they were able to call. What we had at the central was the night bell that connected into the bedroom. So, when they called, this night bell in the bedroom would ring, and we'd go and answer the call, and made whatever connection they wanted.

FK: Usually, what kind of calls were they, though, at night?

MI: Well, for doctors. And then, of course, every so often, a drunkard would call, you know, late at night. But as a whole, I think people, the subscribers, observed that the central closed at 9 o'clock.

- FK: You mentioned before that there were some people who liked to call anyway?
- MI: Oh, yeah. There were some people, you know, really bothersome. But as you worked there, you find out who they were and scold them or whatever.
- FK: (Chuckles) Oh, you scolded them?
- MI: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.
- FK: About how many subscribers did the phone company have?
- MI: Shee, I would say, there must have been about--shee, I've forgotten--but I would say about 150 in North Kona and maybe another 150 in South Kona.
- FK: So, your area covered . . .
- MI: North and South Kona. Then, we had connections into Waimea and into Hilo.
- FK: Then, how were people charged?
- MI: From North Kona to South Kona or vice versa, I think it was five cents. And Hilo--I've forgotten, but anyway there was a charge for calls into Hilo and also into Waimea.
- FK: What about local?
- MI: Local, within the North Kona district, there was no charge. And then, with South Kona, there was no charge. But if you call out of your district, then there was a charge.
- FK: Then, there was a flat rate?
- MI: Yeah, flat rate for subscription rate. Then, the toll. There was, as I said, the toll charge, wherever you called out of your district.
- FK: How was this recorded, though? The charges?
- MI: Oh, we'd have a pad and we'd record it. At the end of the month or daily, we'd turn it in, and they'd keep a record.
- FK: What was your salary and what were the benefits that came with the job?
- MI: Oh, you mean, pay at the telephone exchange? Yeah. My pay was sixty dollars a month.
- FK: That sounds good.

MI: At that time. Yeah, it was good pay. And eight hours.

FK: You slept there?

MI: Slept at the telephone exchange.

FK: So, that was the benefit over there? (Laughs)

MI: Well, (chuckles) actually, although it was eight hours, but part of the time we slept, you know, because we closed at 9 o'clock. But we were on duty anyway.

FK: Then, you said, the post office was at the same place?

MI: Post office was the same building.

FK: Can you describe what was . . .

MI: Yes. The mail used to come in--that is, the Honolulu mail--used to come in from Kawaihae on the boat. Then, from Kawaihae, the mail carrier picked it up and went to Waimea.

FK: Who was that? Do you know?

MI: At that time, there were several of them. I know Kaipo Weeks was one of them. And then, later on, a fella by the name of Bert Tarpley from Waimea brought in the mail. I don't know who had the route from Kawaihae harbor or wharf up to Waimea. And from Waimea, it came to Kona. Whatever mail we had, we sent it back by the same carrier, back to Waimea and down to Kawaihae. He used to come in every Friday. And then, of course, we distributed our local mail.

FK: What did they come in?

MI: They came in sacks--each one, locked. Of course, the first-class mail was locked. And then, the packages and so on, third-, fourth-class mail, came in bags, too--canvas bags, but they were not locked.

FK: How about your mail boxes, like that?

MI: Mail boxes, they would open it by combination.

FK: And you had a general delivery, also?

MI: We had a general delivery. They would come to the counter, and they'd ask for general delivery. We'd go through the mail and read out to them, and if there was their mail--their letter--then we'd hand it over to them.

FK: Did you have to do the sorting, also?

MI: Yes, we had to sort the mail out, put it in the boxes. But, you know, in those days, there weren't too many mail boxes.

FK: About how many?

MI: I would say about a hundred boxes. So, not much.

FK: What else did you do in the post office?

MI: Then, of course, they had the registration. They had insurance, and then they had the money orders. Yeah, that's about it.

FK: So, what were your hours, then, at the post office?

MI: My hours were usually on Saturdays and Sundays. Yeah, weekends.

FK: You said, on weekdays, even though you were at the telephone exchange, sometimes you'd . . .

MI: Yeah. Weekdays, I was there at telephone exchange from 5 [o'clock p.m.] to 5 in the morning. But during summer vacations, of course, we had a rotation basis. So, I worked during the day, too, during the summer vacation.

FK: What were the post office hours, though? You said, people came at . . .

MI: Well, usually from 8 [o'clock a.m.] to 4 [o'clock p.m.]. And, you know, being a rural area like that, country, if they come after 4, if we were there, naturally we'd serve them. Because [the post office] was in the same building.

FK: And I suppose people had to travel long distances?

MI: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

FK: So, that location in Holualoa, is the building still there now?

MI: The building is still there, but the post office has changed. The building is used as a home now.

FK: I thought we'd go on to your high school years, but before that, we were talking last time about games that you played when you were young. And you mentioned, like steal stone and peewee [also known as "pee-o-wee"], guava-gassen [war]. Can you tell me something about some of those games?

MI: Yeah. Of course, marbles was a very common game. We used to bet a lot. We used to form a circle. And then, in a circle, if you shoot and put any of those marbles out of the ring, that's yours.

Then, of course, we used to have what is called "pee-o-wee."

You'd get a stick--a guava stick--oh, about two feet long, and then a shorter one about seven inches. If you're right-handed, you'd hold the shorter one with your left hand and strike on the shorter one. And the guy on the other side, if he caught that, then he'd come in and it'd be his turn. If he missed it, then you'd go to the next step. The next step, I've forgotten, but anyway, it would be something like you'd put the shorter stick on the longer one, and you'd tap it twice, and then hit it. If you didn't miss, if you hit it, you can continue until you . . .

FK: Oh, so there're all steps and each time, it's different . . .

MI: Right, right. Right, right. Of course, you start off first with a hole in the ground--a slit in the ground. You put your short stick on it. And then, you'd take your long stick, and then push it out. I mean, drive it out. And if they caught it, then they'd come in. If they missed it, you go to the next step.

FK: How many people would play this at one time?

MI: Oh, any number. Any number.

FK: Oh. So, everybody would have to run for the . . .

MI: Right, right. And the guy that caught the short stick when it was hit to them, he'd have a chance to come in, you see?

FK: How about steal stone? I don't understand that.

MI: Oh, yeah, steal stone. You'd have two rings [circles], oh, at whatever distance was available on the roadside. You'd have whatever number of stones--five stones, ten stones--in the center of the ring. And you'd guard your ring. You can go to the opponent's ring. If they chase you and they catch you, then you're out of the game. You see? So, let's say, there were five of us on each team. I'd go, one guy would chase me. The next guy would go; the other guy would chase me. I can beat him back to his circle, maybe, when everybody goes out. Then, I'd steal his stone and run back to my ring, and put it back--put it in my ring, see? My circle, rather.

FK: So, it was whoever stole the most stones?

MI: Yeah, yeah. The team that had the most stones would be the winner.

FK: What was guava gassen?

MI: Guava gassen was, during green guava season, we'd pick guavas. We'd get at a distance and throw guavas at each other. For shields, for protection, we'd cut off the cover of a five-gallon kerosene can. Those days, kerosene used to come in a five-gallon can. There was a handle there, you'd hold the handle, and then you'd use the cover as a shield.

FK: That must have been a messy game, though.

MI: Oh, yeah. Then, sometimes, you'd pick the riper ones and smash 'em on the side, eh? It was kinda dangerous sometimes. You get hit by the guava, but. . . .

FK: Do you remember any of your childhood friends and what their parents might have been doing?

MI: Yes. During my grammar grades, elementary grades, there were quite a few friends I remember. There's one of the Ota boys. He's still alive. He's still living in Holualoa. And then, quite a few of them moved to Honolulu. There used to be a Koike boy--Sadao Koike. He's now on Kauai. I think he's retired. He was with the plantation there as an engineer. Then, there was Yoshihara, Hoichi. Yoshihara, he's passed away. After graduating from high school, he went into Hilo to work. He passed away. There was Tokunaga, Matao. He left Kona and worked as a fireman, I think, in Honolulu. I think he's retired. I understand he's still alive. Let's see, oh, there was another boy, fella by the name of Kimoto. I don't know what happened to him. He left Kona.

Then, of course, when you came to high school, you found other friends. So, in high school, there were my classmates like Albert Akana. He's deceased, now. Ushiroda, he's deceased. Ishikawa, he's on the Mainland, now. And Takeo Nishibun, he's still in Kona. He's farming in Kona in Kealahou. He's still there. Quite a few of them moved out of the district. They're not here anymore.

FK: What were most of their families into?

MI: Most of the families were farmers.

FK: Oh, coffee?

MI: Yeah, coffee farmers.

FK: You were in the first graduating class at Konawaena High School?

MI: Yes, yes.

FK: Can you describe the years that you spent there in high school? It was the first . . .

MI: Yeah, 1922 was the first year. That's the year that the high school opened. So, we were the first freshmen, ninth-graders, and we were the first graduating class. I know we started off with something like 17 freshmen, I think. And we ended up with five during our senior year. Most of them went away to school in Honolulu--McKinley High School, Mid-Pacific [Institute]. Some went to, I think, Hilo High School. And some of them, of course, dropped out of school. So, we ended up with five boys in our graduating class.

High school, at first, was only a three-classroom building. Then, it expanded to what it is today.

FK: Who were your teachers then?

MI: Most of them are not here anymore. Mrs. Challenger who lives in Holualoa, she was one of our teachers. Let's see. I think she's the only one residing in Kona now. All of them are not here anymore.

FK: What kind of courses were taught?

MI: We had English, social studies, and then we had shop. We had chemistry; we had Latin; and we had algebra, geometry. Let's see, art; we had music. What else did we have?

FK: Gee, just three classrooms?

MI: Yeah. Then, of course, some of them were electives.

FK: How about sports?

MI: Yeah. Sports, we had baseball. We didn't have basketball because there was no gym, no basketball courts. Then, we had football.

FK: But you were such a small student body. You had enough for a team?

MI: Well, we barely had enough members for the team. Kohala was the school that we used to compete against, because there were no other high schools except in Hilo. And Honokaa came up a little later. But Kohala, we competed against Kohala in all of these--football, baseball.

FK: So, you were in the first. . . . Did you participate?

MI: Oh, yes. I participated in all--oh, and then we had track, also. Yeah, track, baseball and football. No basketball.

FK: How was the Konawaena team at this beginning?

MI: Very, very weak.

(Laughter)

MI: I remember playing against Hilo several times. They used to, oh, beat us badly. You know, in those days, there was no such thing as a huddle. You had to call out your signals. Each player on the team had to know by numbers what play was going to be executed. I know, we used to play Hilo. We used to get dirty lickings from Hilo. Well, we had no coach. We had no equipment.

FK: No coach?

MI: We did it ourselves. I never saw a football until I went to high school. So we'd order football books, magazines, and we'd look at it. We'd study it, and we'd make our own plays. And equipment, we had no equipment. There was no such thing as headgear or shoulder pads. Barefoot.

FK: Barefoot?

MI: Oh, yeah.

FK: Do you remember who were some of the first members of your team?

MI: Yeah, I remember.

FK: Were they good?

MI: Oh, they're not here anymore. Most of them are gone.

(Dog barks in background. Taping stops, then resumes.)

FK: Who were the members of your first graduating class?

MI: First graduating class, there's Albert Akana, Joe Ushiroda, Asao Ishikawa, and Hoichi Yoshihara, and myself. Five of us. Albert Akana, after graduating, went to Normal School. He came back as a teacher. Before he passed away, he was principal of Honaunau School. Joe Ushiroda went to Hilo. He worked for some company in Hilo, I've forgotten now. Asao Ishikawa went to Honolulu. He attended Normal School, came back, and taught. I think he taught in Pahala and in Hilo. Then, he moved to the Mainland. He taught on the Mainland. I think he's retired now. Yoshihara went to Hilo. He worked for Hilo Motors in the parts department, and he passed away several years ago. So, that takes care of the four.

FK: So, who's left now?

MI: So, only Ishikawa and I.

FK: Did you have a regular graduation ceremony, too?

MI: Yeah, we had a short ceremony.

FK: How was that?

MI: Oh, I kind of forgotten, but, anyway, the principal spoke, of course.

FK: Must have been an event, though, since it was the first.

MI: But very small attendance. It wasn't much of an exercise.

FK: We were talking, one time, about the Filipino strike in 1924? What

was it's effect on Kona?

MI: [Nineteen] twenty-five. That was '25.

FK: Kona was affected at that time?

MI: Well, Kona had no plantation, you see, in those days. This was the 1925 Filipino Strike.

FK: In Kohala?

MI: All over the state. The Kohala strikers had no place to stay. So, they came to Kona. They stayed in Holualoa where the Koyanagi home is. There's a big building. They called it the Clark Building. It's a big building. They stayed there, they camped there. Oh, there must have been about 200 of them there at that camp. I think there were about two plantations in Kohala, if I recall, those days. They came here until the end of the strike. I don't recall how long the strike lasted, but it was all over the state. I mean, they had it in Kauai, Oahu. Was a Filipino strike.

FK: And how did you get involved? You had a story to tell about that.

MI: Yeah. Well, I was asked to take some strikebreakers back to Kohala. And I was supposed to take them, pick them up at 11 o'clock at night.

FK: With your bus?

MI: On a bus. I used to drive the school bus those days, so the owner of the bus asked me if I would not drive the strikebreakers back to Kohala. I said, "Oh, yes, I will. I'd be glad to." So, about 11 o'clock, I left home. I was supposed to pick them up at one of the buildings away from the strikebreakers' camp. But I think the strikers found out that these guys were--I think there was a busload, so I would say about 30 of them--were going to go back to the plantation to work.

So, when I got there, when I stopped the bus at this particular building where they were supposed to get on the bus, there were, oh, I would say about 50 strikers hiding in the bushes on the side of the road. As soon as I stopped the bus, they all jumped out, and surrounded the bus, and asked me to go back to the camp--the regular [strike] headquarters. So, I went back. They told me to get into the camp grounds.

FK: You loaded them up?

MI: No, no. Because these strikers wouldn't allow that. And the strikebreakers were afraid to come out, too. So, this was about midnight, between 11 and 12 [o'clock], anyway. So, I went back into the camp and stayed there the whole night. Then, next morning,

the owner of the bus, who happened to be a policeman, came. I heard couple of shots fired out in the road. He must have fired couple of shots as a warning and came into the camp and told me to take the bus and get out.

FK: Oh, you were just waiting there all night?

MI: Oh, yeah. Just waiting. Sitting around and looking for an opportunity to run away, but no chance. Then, he came in--the policeman came in. This was about 6 o'clock in the morning.

He yelled at me, "Who told you to bring in the bus here?"

I said, "These guys here. I can't help it."

He said, "Take it out."

I got on the bus and started the bus. As soon as I started the bus, the whole gang of strikers attacked the . . .

FK: Policeman?

MI: . . . policeman. I thought he was dead. Well, soon as they started attacking him, I ran towards the road. From the road to this camp, must have been about, oh, a hundred yards. So, I started running towards the road. But when I got to the road, at the gate there, there were two strikers watching the gate. So, I jumped over the wall and started running. But, you know, when you run in high grass, you can't run. You gotta sort of hop like a rabbit. And all the time, this man was chasing me with a revolver, telling me to stop. So, I kept going. I never ran so fast in my life. Anyway, I jumped over the wall, got into this other land--neighboring land full of grass.

When this guy told me, "Stop. I shoot."

I turned back--sure enough, he had a revolver. So, I told him, "Okay." Meekly, I came back.

This was about 6 o'clock in the morning. And the policeman lay on the ground there. I thought he was dead. They beat 'em up, kicked 'em. Then, about 12 o'clock, the sheriff came with, oh, there must have been about half a dozen other policemen with him. Came in and told me to take the policeman on the bus as fast as I can to the hospital. Oh boy, wasn't I happy then!

FK: Was he all right later?

MI: Yeah, then he was unconscious for a long time. Then, he wasn't normal after that. Yeah, he wasn't. The policeman wasn't normal.

FK: Who was the sheriff?

MI: Sheriff was Charlie Nahale. And the policeman that owned the bus was Antone Amarino. The son used to be the postmaster at Holualoa.

FK: What were your parents doing at this time?

MI: (Father returned to the Aungst family when the sisal mill closed down.)

FK: And what was your mother doing?

MI: My mother was sewing. She took in sewing. She sewed trousers, things like that, shirts.

FK: You mentioned going around the island with some friends?

MI: Oh, yeah. One summer--I've forgotten what year that was--one summer . . .

FK: Is this in high school?

MI: No, no. . . . Let's see. Yeah, I think I was in high school. Yeah, high school, that's right. Anyway, one summer between 1922 and '25, we took a trip around the island. My father, as I said, used to run a taxi. We had two Model-T's. So, I took one of the Model-T's. Let's see, there was Dr. Nakamaru, Asao Ishikawa, and George Iwashita. He went to the Mainland. He was quite successful on the Mainland. He became the chief engineer for General Electric on the Mainland. Anyway, I think that was, yeah, four of us. And we started out, went Hamakua way.

In those days, like for instance, from here to Waimea, there was no paved roads. It was dirt road, you know. All dirt. And naturally, dirt road, where there's no heavy traffic, like from beyond Kalaoa to Puuwaawaa, let's say, for instance. You have two tracks. In the middle, grass growing. That's how it was. We went and my goodness, I remember we had about 17 flat tires. I think it took us about a week to go around the island. We stopped here and there. We stopped in Honokaa. We went to Waipio. We stayed at Laupahoe[hoe] one night, I think, then in Hilo. Then, up the volcano.

I remember, coming up from Hilo to the volcano, that's quite a climb. You don't notice it now, but if you're on an old car. . . . And this here again was a gravel road. I remember, the boys had to get out and walk. You see, the Model-T, when you go on low [gear], you had to press the clutch, and there was a lining. If you burn that lining, then your clutch won't work, see? It's not like now, you throw it into gear. And I remember, we were afraid that we might burn up the clutch, so I told the boys to walk part of the distance, anyway.

FK: When you said 17 flat tires, did you carry the tires with you?

MI: Yeah, I had two extra tires. I remember coming way over there by Honomalino. We patched our tubes. We had no patch already, so we had to use--you know, this California grass? We had to stuff that.

(Dog barks in background. Taping interrupted.)

FK: You stuffed the tires with California grass.

MI: Oh, yeah. California grass, and then we came home, I remember.

FK: How about your food while you going around, like that?

MI: We took our food. Right after coming back from college, I had a boy's club in Holualoa. And every summer, I used to take these kids out around the island on a bus. We used to take our food; we used to take our vegetables. We even used to take our chicken. And chicken feed. We'd go and tie up the chicken where we went, feed 'em. Then, when we needed 'em, we'd kill 'em, clean 'em up, and feed the boys with chicken.

FK: As you travelled around the island, you stopped at the different plantations . . .

MI: No. Different towns, not plantations. The different towns. As I said, we went to Waipio . . .

FK: Did you know people along the way?

MI: No, no. No, we didn't know anybody. We stayed in parks. In Hilo, we stayed at--I still remember--at Hoolulu Park. We camped outside of the park.

FK: That must have been a memorable experience. After graduation, what did you do?

MI: After graduation, I left for Honolulu. I went to Normal School because the other two boys, my two classmates, were going to attend Normal School, so I thought I'd attend Normal School. So, I applied and I went up there for an interview. The principal at the Normal School, I didn't like him. So, I said, "Oh, heck. I'm going to the University." So, I enrolled at the University [of Hawaii] instead of Normal School. That was in 1925.

FK: Where did you stay?

MI: I stayed at a home; I worked at a home. Cleaning the yard, helping in the kitchen. The first place I stayed was at the home where this couple kept several children for the army people. They were going to Punahou, so it was sort of a boarding place for these army personnel children. They were going to Punahou, so they kept 'em there. I worked there as a yardboy and also helped in the kitchen. I stayed there about one year, I think. Then, I changed and three

of us rented a cottage. I worked as a yardboy, also. Then, I quit yardboy when I got into my junior year. I started selling real silk hosiery. Real silk hosiery on a commission basis, see? Three of us stayed in a cottage. Let's see. We rented the cottage for \$27 a month.

FK: Where was that?

MI: This was up [Queen] Emma Street. [Queen] Emma and Lusitana Street. Right above the present Queen's Hospital. And \$27 a month, and we used to cook our own. I used to go and sell real silk hosiery. Sometimes, I'd make good; sometimes, I didn't make anything. So, it was rough.

FK: Who did you sell to?

MI: Oh, the Ja---My area was Kakaako and Kalihi. Then, later on, I got the Punchbowl area. I must have done that for about a year or two. Then, after that, I got a job at the Seaside Hotel as a night clerk from 11 [o'clock] at night till 7 in the morning. So, I worked there. It was good there because the pay included three meals, and a cottage--place to stay--bed linen, towels. No, I think I stayed [and worked] there over a year and a half at the hotel.

FK: What was your salary?

MI: I think it was about \$60, too, there. Yeah, \$60. Then, I took advanced ROTC [Reserved Officers' Training Corps]. So, at that time, they paid us nine dollars a month. So, it wasn't too bad, because I had my three meals and a place to stay, see? So, it was fine. That's when I bought the Model-T Ford. I had to buy a car in order to get to the University in time for classes. So, after leaving work in the morning at 7, 7:30 classes started, so I had to rush up to the University for the 7:30 classes. It worked out nicely.

FK: How were your courses at the University?

MI: Yeah, well, I wasn't an honor student. Far from being an honor student.

(Laughter)

MI: You know, in those days, they used to give you cinch notices. In one of the halls there, they'd have these pigeonholes. And all (names) alphabetically arranged. After exams, you'd go there and you'd look for your (name). If you were failing, you'd get what they call the cinch notice. You go there. That's the first place we used to go (laughs) to see if we got any notices. During my university days, I remember, couple times, I got cinch notices.

FK: But you hung in there.

MI: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MI: This was in 1929. Somebody kidnapped a Jameson boy. This Jameson boy, I think he was in the fifth grade or sixth grade. He was attending Punahou Elementary School. So, one day, a boy comes up with dark glasses. He had one of these frocks--you know, the doctors or the attendants in the hospital use, in white? He came and he said to the principal--the lady principal, I've forgotten her name--that the Jameson father had met an accident, so he came for the son. So, the principal let the boy go with this person who came. Then, I don't recall how many days, but anyway, they found out that he was kidnapped. The father was all right. He wasn't involved in an accident. So, then, they started searching.

The kidnapper was [Myles] Fukunaga--fella by the name of Fukunaga. He worked at the Seaside Hotel in the pantry. I used to go there, too, for my breakfast, for my meals in the kitchen. So, I knew Fukunaga. Of course, at that time, nobody knew he was the kidnapper. He used to send letters to the police and to the family, signed "Three Kings." He asked for ransom. I think it was \$20,000 he asked for. So, the father agreed to pay the ransom. And he was supposed to pay the ransom at Thomas Square. Naturally, the police laid low. So, the father met Fukunaga, handed him the money, and Fukunaga drove off in a car. The police chased him, but because of the traffic situation, they missed him.

Later on, I found out that he hid in the McKinley High School banana patch. McKinley High School had a farm there, so he hid in the banana patch for a while. And the police lost 'em. Before this happened, the request came out to search for the boy. Oh, some of them went up the Pali, where they figured he'd be up the Pali way. They looked all around, they couldn't find him. They offered a reward. . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MI: Anyway, they had a wide search for him. So, the police finally found the [Jameson] boy; he was found near the Seaside Hotel. They suspected it must have been somebody in that vicinity. The cottage where I was living was close to where they found the boy. Oh, I'd say about 50 yards away. So, I became one of the suspects--the number one suspect. They came for me. The detectives came for me. They took me to the Seaside Hotel office, because the boy was found in Seaside property, see? And they questioned me. And they took me before the principal of Punahou School--the elementary school principal, the lady--and the taxi driver that took Fukunaga to Punahou School and took the boy down to Waikiki--dropped them off

in Waikiki. So, the detectives took me before them to identify me. But at that time, they said, shee, they not sure. Okay, then, they took me down to the police station; they questioned me. They let me go.

Then, later on, a couple days later, they came for me again. They took me up to Punahou School again, to the principal there to see if she would identify me. She couldn't. They took me to the taxi stand where the--I still remember his name, a fella by the name of Yoshioka. Took me there, the guy says no, he cannot recall, he cannot remember, he wasn't sure. And you see, at one time, Fukunaga went to a Nuuanu florist and sent some flowers to the parents when they had the funeral services. So, they took me to the florist. This was a Chinese lady. So, the detective asked [her], "How tall was he?"

[She] says, "Oh, all same. All same high, all same big."

Then, the detective [asked], "How did he look?" Face, you know. He made signs around his face like this. He says, "How did he look?"

The lady looked at me. And she says, "Oh, another boy. More nice."

(MI sighs.) So, I tell you, I was really relieved. So, the detective said, "You're lucky. Your looks saved your life."

(Laughter)

MI: And the way they caught him was that he spent the ransom money in Haleiwa at one of the restaurants. And, of course, they circulated the serial numbers of the ransom money. This restaurant owner just happened to look at the serial [number] and made comparisons. This was the ransom money. So, he called the police, and they caught him. That's how he was caught. I wonder if Fukunaga was the first one to be hanged in the territory at that time? Anyway, he was hanged.

FK: You had an exciting time in Honolulu. How was your graduation?

MI: At the University? Yeah. Well, you see, I used to take advanced ROTC. After I graduated, I had to go to camp at Schofield, to meet the requirements of advanced ROTC in order to be commissioned in the reserve. So, I went to camp during the summer. Then in September, I came back and started teaching at Konawaena. So, graduation wasn't that exciting.

FK: Must have been a feeling of accomplishment, though. Seemed like it was a long struggle.

MI: Yeah. In fact, I worked my whole years through college. I never

got any one cent from my folks. I worked right through.

FK: Then, September 1929, you said, you returned to Kona?

MI: Right, right.

FK: What did you do after that?

MI: I think [it was] before September. But, anyway, September, I started teaching at Konawaena. Then, I taught right through.

FK: This was Konawaena what?

MI: Intermediate School.

FK: What grades were you teaching?

MI: Oh, was seventh, eighth, I think, ninth graders. You see, it was departmentalized at that time, and I taught social studies to the different classes.

FK: How was the salary then?

MI: We started off at \$90. Then, it came \$110, I recall. Then, increased. Was very small pay.

FK: Did you live at the school?

MI: No, I lived at home in Holualoa. I commuted. Then, of course, I used to drive the bus, too, when I was teaching.

FK: Oh, you were still . . .

MI: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. For the same . . .

FK: It was the same job?

MI: Right, right.

FK: What were your parents doing by this time?

MI: My parents, by that time. . . . You see, they built that hotel-- Kona Hotel--in 1926. So, they were running the hotel. Father and mother used to run the hotel. Father used to cook, and mother used to clean the rooms and so on. And they had a girl there that did the rooms. Mother did the laundry and things like that. And father did the cooking.

FK: Who were the people who used to stay at the hotel?

MI: Oh, most of them were salesmen, you know.

FK: Oh, travelling salesmen?

MI: Yeah, yeah. Travelling salesmen. Then, we'd have tourists come in once in a while. Because, at that time, the only hotels were the Kona Inn and Manago Hotel in Kona. And, of course, my folks' hotel.

FK: So, the location was pretty good, then, for that area?

MI: Yeah. Right, right.

FK: How long were you at Konawaena Intermediate?

MI: I was there until the war--the Second World War. Then, I transferred to Alae School. They asked me if I would not take the principalship there, so I went there. I stayed there for three years. It was such a long drive, plus the fact that I didn't like little children. It was only from kindergarten to sixth grades, you know. Not that I didn't like the children, but I didn't like to be teaching youngsters. So, I thought, I'd rather come back to high school. So, I came back. And just at that time, they needed a coach at the high school--basketball coach, baseball coach, and a track coach. So, I came back. I was interested in athletics, so I came back and applied for the job, and I got the job. So, I came back as a counselor and athletic coach.

FK: Oh, two jobs in one, then?

MI: Yeah, well, coaching was in the after-school hours. So, was all right.

FK: You mentioned before that about 1929, you were even teaching Sunday school for a while?

MI: Yeah, 1929, I taught Sunday school at Daifukuji. I must have done that for about a year, I think. I knew the reverend, and the reverend used to come to our home quite often. Ah, what was his name?

FK: Nakayama?

MI: Nakayama. Reverend Nakayama. So, he asked me if I would not help. So, I said, "Okay, I'll help." And I. . . . (Chuckles)

FK: Then, in 1932, you were married? In those days, how did this take place?

MI: Well, those days, they still followed the old Japanese practices. Like, you would have the middleman, nakōdo. When everything was settled, you'd take your yuinō [betrothal gift]. Your. . . . What do you call that in English? Dowry. Dowry, yeah? Is that what they call it? Anyway, they'd arrange for everything. They'd go and ask

for the bride's hand to the bride's parents. Okay, everything settled. And we used to have a party. Those days, usually, most of them dressed in kimonos, you know, for the bridal party.

FK: What did you wear?

MI: I wore a suit. Suit, regular suit. And you'd invite the neighbors. The kumiai, of course, and then your friends and neighbors. Like now, you have a wedding party for your reception. The thing ends about 9 o'clock [p.m.], yeah? In those days, it was a whole-night affair. Yeah. They'd sing, and they'd drink, and. . . . Oh, yes. Used to be a whole-night affair. You see, most parties, in those days, were prepared by the family, friends, and the neighbors.

FK: The food?

MI: Yeah. There was no such thing as catering or going to a hotel in those days. So, the food was prepared by family and friends. So, then, usually, after the party, the following day, you'd have another party for the helpers who came to help. Yeah, quite an affair.

FK: It was a lengthy affair, then?

MI: Yeah. Lengthy. Very lengthy. There was more participation by the guests in those days than today. Oh, yes. They'd sing and they'd whoop it up.

FK: How did the depression affect you?

MI: Yeah, depression came. Of course, things were hard to get. But the thing that I remember most about the depression was that I recall the principal coming to me, saying that, "Next year, we are going to dismiss quite a number of teachers because of the depression. We'll have to cut down the staff." So, he said, "If you'd like to be on the staff next year, the only thing open for you is teaching typing."

And I remember telling him, "Shee, you know, when I type, I type with two fingers. I can't type."

He said, "That's all right. Why don't you do this--take one of the typing books home and practice during the summer vacation. And then, at least you can type. And when you come back, you take over the typing classes."

So, I said, "Well, okay." It was a job, you know? Otherwise, I'd have no job. So, I accepted it. And I took the typing manual home, practiced. I practiced for a week, I think. I gave up. I said, "Aw, heck." But, anyway, I didn't tell the principal that.

So, I came back. When I taught typing, there were some second-year

students and first-year students. I never demonstrated. I told 'em what to do--you know, follow the textbook. Tell 'em what to do--the mechanics. I learned the mechanics of a typewriter and taught typing for about two years. Two years. Today, even today, I type with two fingers.

(Laughter)

MI: But we turned out some pretty good typists. As I said, I told 'em what to do, but I never demonstrated. (Laughs) You know, when you go to a country school, those days, you had to teach many things. Like, for instance, I recall, one year I had to teach art, math, social studies. You know, you had to fit in. You couldn't just be specialized in one particular field because the staffing was such that you had to take more than one subject.

FK: What about lesson plans and things like that?

MI: Well, you had to plan. Those days, every Friday, you had to turn in your lesson plan to the principal, and he'd go over your lesson plan. He'd criticize your lesson plan or whatever. He'd make comments. Then, we used to keep a register of all the students--their attendances, absences, their birthdays, so on.

FK: How about discipline in the schools in those days?

MI: Discipline in those days was much better than now. Oh, yeah. I think, in those days, the kids had a little more respect for the teachers than today. And I think this stems from the parental influence. But today, with so many activities going on, more freedom so to speak. . . . Yeah, teachers were more respected, as I said, in those days than they are today.

FK: Were you involved in sports while at Konawaena Intermediate, also?

MI: When I was teaching? Yes, I used to help the community teams, those days. Coach community teams.

FK: What were they?

MI: Baseball. Primarily baseball.

FK: Who were they for? Young or old?

MI: Yeah. The regular senior league teams. So, we used to have a community league. Then, we used to have a pickup team that used to challenge the whole island. That is, Kohala used to have their team, Ka'u used to have their team, Hilo used to have their team. That organization was called. . . . Not the Big Islands, but I forgot now. Big Island Union or something. Anyway, there was a league, and we used to participate in that league. After the local league ended, we used to select the team and they used to play.

FK: This was in the '30s?

MI: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Then, we also used to have what was called the West Hawaii Japanese League--Kohala, Kona, and Ka'u. We used to have teams and we used to compete against each other.

FK: What were the ages of the people who were involved?

MI: You mean, the players? Well, those days, there was no such thing as Little League. So, we had what was called the junior league, with, oh, I'd say, youngsters from about 15 to probably 18. Then, we started the senior league, made up of adults. We used to have teams from North Kona, Central Kona, Kealahou. We used to have a league. Then, we used to have what is called the All-Kona League with an all-Kona team that used to compete against Hilo teams. Baseball was quite active in those days.

FK: Even with the depression on?

MI: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Then, of course, during the war [World War II], no athletic events. Then, after the war, it started up again. It was quite active.

FK: How about the coffee schedule which came in the '30s?

MI: I think the coffee schedule started in around 1936, I'm not sure. [It started in 1932.] But, anyway, because of the need of the farmers to have their children help them on the farms, the coffee schedule was established. And the coffee schedule ran from. . . . Let's see. When was it now?

FK: November?

MI: November, yeah. November to August, I think. November to August. And August, September, October, November--those three months--was the regular vacation--coffee vacation. This is the time when it was coffee season, you see? So, that went on for quite a number of years. Then, when was it? Around nineteen sixty. . . . '67, eh? Was it '67 or '68?

FK: Yeah, '67.

MI: They reverted back to the regular schedule.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

FK: Your children were born during the '30s?

MI: Yeah.

FK: Where were you living?

MI: I was living in Kainaliu. Kainaliu, opposite the Sandy's Drive-In, there. Next to the Kadooka Nursery. I lived there. Many years.

FK: And your girls went to Konawaena?

MI: Yeah, my daughters attended Konawaena.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MI: In the early days, they had general merchandise stores along the ma uka road, here. They supplied the farmers with their food, their groceries, and whatnot. And usually, it was on an annual basis that they paid the merchants, you know, instead of cash. This was paid by coffee--by the coffee crop at the end of the coffee season. The merchants, in turn, would pay American Factors, the wholesaler, in coffee, you see? They'd collect the coffee from the farmers--the merchants--and then they'd send it to American Factors and get credit for their loans. In this way, it used to operate.

FK: During the depression, lots of debts were incurred?

MI: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. You know, like anything else, quite a number of the stores were in debt. Some of the farmers were in debt. And when American Factors---the predecessor to American Factors was Hackfeld and Company, a German outfit. Then, it became American Factors. American Factors used to have their wholesale outlet in Kailua. They used to sell lumber, all kinds of merchandise, groceries, and whatnot. As I said, quite a few of the merchants were in debt.

The American Factors also ran a coffee mill. They got the parchment coffee down to the mill, and they cleaned it and turned it into green coffee, and shipped it out. So, after many years, American Factors told its merchants, "Okay, we'll wipe out your debts." I guess they made enough money from the merchants and the farmers, eh? So, they wiped out all of the debts. Of course, I don't know what each merchant or each farmer owed, but there was quite a bit of debt, I understand, at that time. American Factors wiped off the debts.

It was interesting, too. You know, the American Factors used to hire a man to patrol the highway at night to see that none of the farmers would sell their coffee to some other people than the American Factors for cash. If they turned it [coffee] in [to American Factors], they got no cash. This was to pay for their debts, see? So, some of them would sneak their coffee out and sell it to some other outlet so that they could get cash. (Chuckles) I remember this man used to patrol the highway to see that there was no coffee being sneaked out.

FK: Since you mentioned the policing, as far as the police enforcement

went, one time you were mentioning, bootlegging liquor, before?

MI: Well, you see, the police system had no chief of police. There was a sheriff, in those days. The sheriff was elected and he appointed his police. The sheriff, of course, was headquartered in Hilo. We used to have a police force here. And, you know, being local people, they were close to the local people. So, lots of times, you'd get away with, you know. They'd close their eyes to things that they saw. But crime wasn't that extensive in those days. So, it was rather a peaceful, calm area in the early days.

When prohibition came, of course, lots of the people made their own liquor, bootlegged. It was interesting. They used to make liquor out of rice. Shōchū, they used to call it. And they used to make beer. They used to even make swipe. We used to call it "swipe" from sweet potato. They ferment the sweet potato. It's like mush. But when you eat it, the thing gets you drunk, you know. And 'ōkolehao. Used to brew 'ōkolehao.

I remember, the Internal Revenue used to come around and check every so often from Hilo. The local police, for instance, gave us a call saying, "Eh, the revenue people are coming." Of course, then, we'd go and take the big crock. My father used to make beer in a big crock.

He used to tell us, "Carry that. Go hide it in the coffee land." I remember carrying that crock, and he said, "Don't spill 'em." We used to carry that and take 'em down in the coffee land and hide it.

And then, when the revenue people left, the police would call us, "Eh, they left."

So my father used to tell us, "Go and get the crock back." We'd go and haul it back. (Chuckles) I remember he used to bottle his beer in a bottle with a cap on. I remember, when he opened the cap, that thing used to shoot up.

(Laughter)

FK: Potent?

MI: Yeah, potent. But my father loved his drinks. And then, they [also] used to make wine. We used to have vineyards in Holualoa. About three people--Portuguese people--used to have grapes. They used to make wine. We used to go buy the wine, I remember, prohibition days. (Chuckles)

FK: After working at Konawaena Intermediate, you said you went to Alae School?

MI: Right. For three years. This was during the war years.

FK: Did you live there?

MI: No, I commuted.

FK: Oh, you still commuted? You were the principal there?

MI: Uh huh [yes].

FK: How large was the school?

MI: Was a very small school. There were, I think, one, two, three-- there were four of us. Small school.

FK: You were also mentioning how you had to take care of the children?

MI: You see, that's in a very economically depressed area. The children didn't have advantages that other areas had. We used to grow our own vegetables. Some of them were not too sanitary. Some of them didn't even take baths, I could see, so what I used to do was, maybe twice a month, tell the kids, "Okay, we going camping." And I'd camp in the school. Boil hot water and take a tub and saw to it that these kids took a real good bath. That was the motive of the camping, as far as I was concerned--to give them a good bath. And of course, an outing for them to get together. Then, I used to take 'em down to the beach every so often. On a Friday afternoon, walk down the beach, so that they can swim. And the idea there was that they can really wash up, eh? Clean up.

FK: What was the ethnic background of your students?

MI: Hawaiians. Most of them were Hawaiians.

FK: After there, you went back to Konawaena?

MI: Konawaena. Back to Konawaena.

FK: How was the sports there?

MI: They had, at that time, basketball, baseball, and track. There was no football at that time because of the coffee vacation. I coached basketball, baseball and track for many years.

FK: How were the teams?

MI: The teams were all right. They were pretty good. We used to compete with the teams in Honolulu, like St. Louis, Kaimuki, Leilehua, Punahou one year, couple of times, and Waipahu. And used to be a home and home affair with those teams. Oh, I'd say, we'd beat 'em one year; they'd beat us one year. We'd beat 'em again; they beat us.

FK: How did the war [World War II] affect you here in Kona?

MI: Well, you see, as I said, I took advanced ROTC, and when I graduated from the University in '29, I was commissioned a second lieutenant. When the war broke out, I was in the inactive reserve. I remember the commanding officer on this island issued a notice that all reserve officers report to Hilo. So, at that time, there were two of us in Kona. Fella by the name of Fukuda--Mitsuyoshi Fukuda. Later on, he became the commander of the 100th Battalion in Italy. He and I were the only reserve officers in Kona. He came to my home--he was teaching at Konawaena. He came to my home and he says, "Eh, we got to report to Hilo."

I said, "Yeah, that's right." So, I called Hilo and I said, "Are we supposed to report to Hilo?"

And the commanding officer said, "What's your name?"

I said, "Oh, Inaba."

"Who's the other officer there?"

I said, "Fukuda."

"Okay. Wait a minute." Then he came back on the phone. He said, "We want Fukuda to report to Hilo right away. But you, you are too old." You see, at that time, the cutoff age was 39 years. So, he said, "You are past 39. You are too old, so we don't need you here. But we want Fukuda to report immediately." Then, he went and, as I said, he went in with the 100th Battalion. He went to Italy and he became commander of the 100th Battalion.

Then, quite a while after that, they opened it up for volunteers for the Americans of Japanese ancestry that they may volunteer for service. So, I remember that Timmy Hirata--he became the superintendent of the Department of Education--he and I went to Kailua. At that time, American Factors building was the place where you went to volunteer. I was the first volunteer in Kona. I went there first thing in the morning with Timmy Hirata and we volunteered. I was the first one to volunteer in Kona for the service. But, here again, they didn't take me because they said, "You're too old." And I tried later again, but they wouldn't take me.

FK: What was life like here?

MI: Oh, was rough. Was rough. We had blackouts. We couldn't travel at night. Then, finally, when we were allowed to travel, we had to travel with that blacked-out light--you know, headlights. We could travel, but we had to get permit to travel from North Kona to South Kona. We had to get a permit. And gasoline---no, tires were rationed; liquor was rationed. Yeah, it was kind of rough.

FK: I understand there were many soldiers in Kona?

MI: Oh, yeah. There were lots of soldiers that came here. They camped on the school grounds. They used the . . .

FK: On the school grounds?

MI: Yeah, Konawaena School. Then, they had the hospital. They used the hospital. They used the schools. There was a unit up in Holualoa School, I remember. Then, we had the local guard--civilian guard. Quite a few of them served in the local community. Home guard, yeah? And as far as other commodities went, it wasn't that bad. It was only the inconvenience, I think, that we felt most. There was no getting away. I think, to be honest about it, there was a tense feeling.

FK: Because it was heavily populated by Japanese here.

MI: Oh, yes. That's why, see?

FK: Since you were a teacher and you were a Japanese, did you encounter any problems?

MI: No. No, no problem as far as that went.

FK: What was the ethnic breakdown of the students in the school when you were teaching? Did you see any changes?

MI: Oh, yes. There's been a definite change now. In those days, in the early days, I would say, (among) the student population, the Japanese were about 75 to 80 percent.

FK: This is when you started?

MI: Right, right, right. And today, it's about what? Thirty percent? For instance, at Konawaena, you hardly saw a Caucasian boy. Not a Caucasian boy, so-called haole. Of course, there were some Portuguese students, but very few haoles. In fact, hardly any. Hardly any haoles. They all sent their children to private schools. But today, I think, the haoles comprise about, I would say, about 30 percent. The Orientals, about 30 percent. And the others, mixed--Hawaiians, Filipinos, you know.

FK: As counselor, what did that involve?

MI: That involved, of course, counseling the youngsters who had difficulties in class. You know, in their behavior problems, adjustment problems. And then, counseling those students who planned to go to college. Trying to find for them what college they should go to, what they need to apply, and so on--applications, college entrance. But primarily, it was counseling the maladjusted students.

FK: Did you have very many?

MI: Oh, yeah. Quite a few, quite a few. Every day. The behavior problems, disciplinary problems.

FK: As an example, like how were some of these handled?

MI: Well, you'd have a conference with the teacher first. What the problems were. If necessary, bring in the parents. Go to visit the parents, get their version and get their support. Yeah. Not only in academics, but in their social behavior, you had to counsel them.

FK: You did this until 1968?

MI: I don't recall now. It could be around there--'68.

FK: So, during this period of time, did you notice any changes in attitudes of students or problems encountered with students?

MI: Yeah. As time went on, I think there's been a change. It's vastly different from what it is today than what it was before. As I said, I think, back when I was counselor, they respected law and order more than they do now. They had little more respect for teachers and the elders. But I wouldn't say that of every youngster today, but I'm speaking in general terms, now. You don't have that kind of respect that the early youngsters had for their teachers and their elders today.

FK: So, by the time you were retiring from your job, you had noticed a definite change already?

MI: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Definitely. Definitely.

FK: How about your helping students go to college? Did the number of students increase going to college?

MI: Yeah. Even during my time, we had about 60 percent of them going to either technical school or college.

FK: Gee, that's a pretty good . . .

MI: Yeah, yeah. Good percentage over here. Because at that time, as I said, most of them were Oriental children. And in comparison to other ethnic groups, I think you gotta admit that the Japanese parents saw to it that the children went to . . .

FK: Education?

MI: Education. They got their maximum education possible within their means.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

FK: What is your opinion of teaching as a profession, as far as you're concerned?

MI: I think, teaching, to me, has been wonderful. I've always felt that I have contributed something to my community and to the youngsters that attended school. Because teaching is not only academics--you know, teaching academics--it's, I think, character building. So many facets to education. For instance, I've coached many years. And to me, winning, of course, was important. But more than that, I think character building among the youngsters was very important. So, when you feel that you had contributed something to an individual, I think you feel that there's a lot of compensation.

(Visitor arrives. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MI: When you look at teaching, you get a certain amount of satisfaction that you may have helped youngsters along the way.

FK: Do you notice any changes in the attitudes of teachers in the past?

MI: Well, there, I guess, I would not speak. In general terms, it depends on the particular individual. In the olden days, we had some very dedicated, conscientious teachers. We had some that were not so dedicated and conscientious. You find that today, too. It's a matter, I think, of what era had more. So, you can't generalize on those things, I think. We have some very dedicated and effective teachers today.

FK: In 1950, you received an award. The Sportsman. . . . What was that? The Big Island? What did that involve?

MI: You see, every year, there's a committee in Hilo that selects a Sportsman of the Year and the Athlete of the Year. The outstanding athlete of the year in the county and also the sportsman--that is, the man or woman who contributed most to athletics for that particular year. And in one of the years--I think it was 1950--they selected me as the Sportsman of the Year. That was because I helped in the community leagues.

FK: This must have taken quite a bit of your time?

MI: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Used to take my time every Sunday. And weekdays, too, coaching, helping, carrying on clinics for the youngsters, you know, things like that.

FK: How about funding?

MI: Well, each organization had their own ways of raising their own funding needs.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape Nos. 9-48-3-81 and 9-49-3-81

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Minoru Inaba (MI)

January 22, 1981

Kealahou, Hawaii

BY: Faye Komagata (FK)

FK: This is an interview with Mr. Minoru Inaba at his home in Kealahou, Kona, Hawaii. Today's date is January 22, 1981. Mr. Inaba, can you tell me about the responsibilities and duties in the office of vice-principal when you served at Kona High School.

MI: Basically it was a supportive position, by that I mean, supporting the principal. And, the other functions were disciplinary problems in the school, in the classroom, on the campus, were referred to the vice-principal. And at that time, taking charge of the campus that is the janitor, custodial work, request for repairs, things of that nature.

FK: Were you vice-principal until you retired?

MI: Yes, yes.

FK: Well, how was the salary?

MI: Well, the salaries . . .

FK: As compared to what you had before.

MI: Well, it wasn't too good and now after I retired the teachers unionized and lobbied for better wages and as a result the wages today are very much better than what it used to be, you know, during my tenure in office.

FK: Would you mind giving an example of . . .

MI: Hmm?

FK: Would you mind telling how much, about how much?

MI: I think, as vice-principal when I retired, I was getting \$800, today, with the number of years having served in the department, as vice-principal, I think I would have about, oh, I would say about two-and-a-half times more.

FK: How did you find this vice-principal job compared with your job as a counselor?

MI: Yeah, I think the vice-principal's job was very much more challenging and I think it was, to me, very interesting because you had to deal with students who were in difficulty. All kinds of behavior problems, uh, academic problems, you know, home problems and to help these youngsters, many times you had to go visit the homes quite often.

FK: You even had to do that?

MI: Oh yes, talk to the parents and those youngsters who needed punishment, we punished them by suspension from school and once in a great while expulsion from the school. And, I think, the behavior or the attitudes of the youngsters today differ somewhat from what it used to be. In the olden days, the family, there was a closer knit in the family and I would say their behavior was a little better than what it is today. I think today's youngsters are very independent and there are very many influences that they are exposed to, you know?

FK: I think you mean, like, showing respect.

MI: Right, I'm talking in terms of the school now. Respecting the teachers, respecting the rules and regulations of the school and so on. So, it was a different kind of situation. There was a lot of mischief among the youngsters but attitudes, I think, were different at that time.

FK: As far as suspension goes, did you find it very effective?

MI: Yes, yes. Normally we suspended them for about a week and at the end of the suspension period the parents had to accompany their youngsters to school to have a conference and when they were suspended a letter was sent to the parents explaining the infraction or why the youngster was suspended. And as I said, before he or she could be reinstated the parents had to come in for a conference.

FK: But did it help the students, do you think?

MI: I think, by and large, I think suspensions helped the youngsters.

FK: Some of the duties you just mentioned though, weren't they also some of the duties of a counselor?

MI: Yes and no, for instance, a counselor would, yes, I think there was a certain amount of overlapping. But the vice-principal's position was more disciplinary cases, whereas the counselors would be academics.

And there was a close relationship with the counselor, you know. You get into conference with the counselor regarding a youngster and it was a cooperative approach to the betterment of the youngster, a lot of times, you know.

FK: What about your sports activities when you became vice-principal?

MI: I continued as coach.

FK: So what were you coaching then?

MI: Baseball, basketball and track. There was no football while I was there because of the coffee schedule, but we had track, baseball and basketball.

FK: When did you retire from teaching?

MI: I retired in 1968, in August of 1968.

FK: When you retired, did you have plans already, or . . .

MI: Well, after having been with the Department of Education for 38 years, I thought maybe I was due for a good rest and do the things that I wanted to do like fishing, things like this. But it didn't turn out that way. After I retired, in fact, the year that I retired, people approached me, the community people, and asked me if I would not run for elected office. Not having had any experience, I said definitely no, I'm not interested in running for office but upon so many people coming to my home and insisting I run, I finally decided to run and in 1968 I ran for the office of representative from our district. And I was elected at the first attempt and since then I served, except for one term, when I was defeated. That was in 1972, I think it was.

FK: Who defeated you?

MI: There was a young fellow by the name of Archie Hapai and he ran against me. He ran as a Republican and he defeated me by 60 votes. Then the following term I ran again and I defeated him.

FK: Before we get into more of your political history, previously we talked about students and discipline, could you describe how students were disciplined, maybe comparing with the days, you know, when you were going to school, you mentioned Japanese school and how you were disciplined. Could you mention some of them?

MI: Well, discipline, I think, basically is, let's put it that way, that is when a youngster got into trouble, it was counselling, I mean talking to the youngster, pointing out to him, you know, why it was not right what he was doing and usually, maybe you give him about two chances. Then maybe on the third offense you'd take harsh measures, denying him certain privileges. For instance, if a youngster was involved in athletics, you deny him participation in athletics. And if there was a continuation of violations then the next step would be suspension and then if he still continued it, it meant expulsion from school. But that was the last resort, expulsion was the last resort. Before a youngster was recommended for expulsion, he'd have to violate many, many offenses, many times before you expel any youngster from school.

FK: You gave them a lot of chances then?

MI: Yeah, yeah.

FK: And how did this compare with when you were young?

MI: Well, it depends, I guess, you know, on the administration of the school. Some are more lenient than others and they do, I think, suspend youngsters and . . .

FK: There are more direct methods, too, you were talking about like holding an eraser . . .

MI: Yeah, holding, right, right. Then I, well, you know, with the high school youngsters, that kind of punishment doesn't work. Maybe with a youngster in elementary grades, in the lower grades, probably, punishment like that would work. But, it was more the kind of punishment that would make the youngster think, you know.

FK: When you were going through high school, was that about the same methods, too, or they were all good students in those days?

MI: Well, yeah.

FK: Well, yours was a pretty small class.

MI: Small class, so we were close to the teachers and, you know, there was no . . .

FK: The feelings were different then?

MI: There was, I think, a difference, we respected our teachers, what they said was . . .

FK: For your own good?

MI: Right, right. Like, a lot of times you get punishment in school, you'd come home and you get another punishment on top of that from your parents. It was a different kind of situation, during my latter years in school. We dared not touch a youngster physically, you know.

FK: Oh, when you were associated with teaching?

MI: Oh yes, yes. Because the times had changed, if you had punished the youngster physically, you were liable for suit so we dared not spank. Of course, you don't spank a high school youngster, but you wouldn't physically punish any youngster.

FK: You also mentioned you had a coffee farm?

MI: Yeah.

FK: When was this?

MI: This was during the war years. No, excuse me, it was about 1953. At that time, the coffee price was very good. So, to earn a few dollars extra to send my daughters to college on the Mainland, I had to get into some project, that would give me some source of income, additional income. So I started a coffee farm. It was a small farm, two acres, in size. And it helped somewhat.

FK: And for how long did you have that?

MI: I had that farm for about four years. Then the price became so low that it didn't pay to operate a coffee farm so I gave up.

FK: Did you run it yourself?

MI: Yeah.

FK: Was it a lease or did you buy the land?

MI: It was leased from the Greenwell Estate.

FK: Can you give us an idea as to how much the lease was?

MI: At that time the lease was the value of one bag of parchment, one bag parchment.

FK: Per year?

MI: Per year, per acre. So, in other words, I had to pay the cost of two bags of parchment as lease rental. It was very reasonable.

FK: Yes, it does [seem so], except the time involved.

MI: I enjoyed farming, in the afternoon I'd go down to the farm, then weekends, farm. Then of course, during the vacation period which was coffee season I'd work on the farm, you know.

FK: Did you grind your own coffee or did you send it out?

MI: No, we sent it to the co-op, Sunset Co-op, as cherry. So as far as processing the coffee, we weren't involved in processing. It was done at the mill.

FK: Did your daughters help?

MI: Oh yes, oh yes. (Laughs) We all did, daughters, and the wife.

FK: And I understand you were married in 1956?

MI: Mm hmm.

FK: So sometime after that you gave up the coffee farm?

MI: Right, right.

FK: When did you get involved with Great Hawaiian Financial?

MI: My brother is the president of the Great Hawaiian Financial Corporation. The main office is in Honolulu. When I retired, he wanted to open up a branch in Kona so he asked me if I would not manage the branch office, so I told him, "No, I'm retired, I'd like to take it easy." And he insisted that I manage the office because I knew the people in the community and so at first I said, "If you really want me, I'll go there on a part-time basis." Then in February of 1969 he opened up the office in Holualoa and I thought I'd work part-time but he insisted that since he opened the office that I put in full-time. So I did put in full-time and I'm still there.

FK: It's difficult to retire then?

MI: Yeah, actually, after I retired I worked harder, as far as time goes. You know, during my teaching career with the Department of Education it was 7:30 a.m. to maybe 3:00 or 3:30 p.m. but with politics and management of the branch office of the Great Hawaiian Financial Corporation, it involves a lot of time.

FK: Why was Holualoa chosen, right there?

MI: Well, the building was there in the first place and since, I guess, Norman, my brother Norman, president of the Great Hawaiian Financial Corporation was born and raised there, I guess he had a little aloha for the community and he thought maybe Holualoa would be the place. At that time Kailua wasn't developed as much as it is today, see? And anyway, most of the work is field work, you know, going out meeting people, asking them to patronize our company, so as far as the location, it didn't matter too much. Of course, if you're located in a highly populated location--as in Kailua or Kealahou you have certain advantages, it didn't matter that much.

FK: Because you're the only one there.

MI: Right.

FK: There's nothing else.

MI: Right.

FK: You have no competition up ma uka, anyway, in that area?

MI: Yes, yes, no competition there, but as we cover the whole district, there is a lot of competition, you know. You have the banks, you have the credit unions, savings and loan companies in Kona, then you have the industrial loan companies so there's a lot of competition.

FK: Okay, we can go on to politics now. How was it as far as orientation goes, when you were first elected to office?

MI: Well, you know, having been with the Department of Education all my life, my interest was in education and there was very little concern about politics, you know? Except supporting candidates during election time. But the inner workings of the legislature or the government, I knew very little of and upon being elected it was a learning process. There are so many facets to government. It's been really a learning process, in fact, even when I retired, I mean even when I was defeated after ten years it still was a learning process. Because in government you'll have to know a wide range of functions. In the legislature you have to know the workings of the government and it involves health, education, transportation, labor and all kinds of, social services. So it's a continuing learning process and it's been interesting; it's been challenging and there was no end of work, as far as that goes.

FK: When you first ran for office, how different were the issues then as compared to now?

MI: The issues were somewhat different, today you have for instance, in our district we have a much larger and diverse population, and the request or the needs and demands are much greater than it used to be. Then conditions have changed. For instance, crime has increased, construction has increased; the problems have increased. The need for additional water systems, for instance, has increased. There is a need for additional classrooms, that is, for the growing schools like Kealakehe, one of the fastest growing schools in the state. These are the things that have changed as we went along. Demands for transportation facilities, roads, harbors, boat harbors, you know, water systems all have increased and there's been quite a change.

FK: When you first ran for office, do you recall what the main issues were then?

MI: Not much difference as far as issues were concerned. Of course, basically it's what government can provide for the constituents. I remember the first year that I ran one of the big issues in Kona, in our district, was the construction of a hospital. There was an urgent need for a new hospital. Expanding water systems in our district so that people in the outlying districts could tap on to the city water was another. These were the kinds of things that were continually needed, yeah? And then the question of highways, like the Queen Kaahumanu Highway, Kuakini Highway, all of these to make transportation more convenient. And all of these helped, I think, in the economic growth of our district. For instance, without water there's no growth, you know.

FK: When you first went to the legislature, though, you knew that there would be problems that you wanted to solve or have help with but you were new with the legislature so what were some of the things that you might have encountered?

MI: As I said, in the beginning it was a learning process, you know. When you first go down to the legislature you have to first study the different needs of the different departments in the state.

FK: You're thinking on the state level?

MI: Right, right. Then of course you'll have to constantly think in terms of what can be done for your district, the constituents you represent--and which had priority. Now there are certain aspects that you consider the state as a whole before you consider your district and there are certain things, you have to consider your constituency first before the state. So it depended on the particular project, particular issue that was involved. For instance, if there is an issue that comes up you like to get the reaction or the concerns of your own constituents because after all you're representing them. And so, you go according to the wishes of your constituency. That is the majority of your constituency.

FK: Through the years, people have always said that you were always open to suggestion or when people ask for help you're always available.

MI: Yes, uh huh.

FK: Having been such a busy person, though.

MI: Yes, you try to accommodate whatever people requested, do the best you can. And a lot of times it was very satisfying that you could accomplish what they needed or what they wanted, but a lot of times, too, there was frustration, disappointment because you couldn't accomplish what was requested. Circumstances were such that you could not do or help, you know, do what they wanted or help them in their needs. But definitely you try your best and that's the best you can do.

FK: You served on many committees when you were in the state legislature?

MI: Yes.

FK: And it seems like one of the longest was the Finance Committee.

MI: Yes, Finance Committee. I thought that it was important to serve on the Finance Committee because this is where the money is. And to work for projects in our district, serving in the Finance Committee, I thought would have the advantages. You see, our district has grown so rapidly lately that a lot of the needs of the community like the water systems, highways, schools, larger schools, to accommodate the growing population and the student population, we were behind. And it was a lot of catching up to do, you know? And so I thought the best place to serve was in the Finance Committee.

It is not a written rule but a policy in the House is that if you serve on the Finance Committee, you could not be a chairman of any other committee because the workload in the Finance Committee was such that you had no time, you know. Time was limited so you had no time to act as chairman of any committee. Of course, you could serve as a vice-chairman of another committee aside from the Finance Committee. I would say 75 percent of all the bills introduced in the legislature were referred to the Finance Committee. All money deals, deals that involved money are referred to the Finance Committee. So serving on the Finance Committee, I think you get a better picture, an overall picture of the operation of the state. You see the whole picture, the whole works there.

FK: While serving on the Finance Committee, was there anything that stands out in your mind?

MI: Yes, I think the most important thing, of course, is to balance the budget, you know. And to see that the revenues of the state were wisely expended, meeting the needs. There's no end to the needs, you know. The requests that come in, you have to make choices and set priorities--which projects, which programs should have priority. These are the kinds of things I think is the importance of the Finance Committee.

FK: While you served on the committee, though, did you find times when you were disappointed or . . .

MI: Yes, in politics you know it's not all roses. There are times it's very satisfying and yet there are times when you're very frustrated, disappointed because you can't, as I said, you can't do things that you want to do for the public. And a lot of times due to lack of funds, you can't meet the requests that do come in during the session.

Of course, lately in the last couple of years there has been a surplus but, then again, you can't go ahead and squander the funds because revenues fluctuate from time to time. Of course in the last couple of years, revenues have been good as far as the state goes but you can't just go ahead and squander. For instance, if you establish a program, it's incumbent that you continue that program. There are certain years that the revenue is far below what is expected and you can't always do away with a particular program that has been initiated, you see?

FK: Oh, you mean that comes up year after year?

MI: Yes, right, right. So you'll have to be very careful, for instance, a lot of programs that the federal government supports or establishes here or initiates. When the federal government pulls out, no funds. And then the state has to carry on that program, you know. These are the kinds of things you have to be very careful with.

FK: Do you have any examples of this?

MI: Yeah, the new administration, national administration may cut off a lot of programs from what the media says, you know? Like in the schools, we have a lot of programs that are supported by the federal government. Now if, what they say is true, many of them may be cut off. Now, is the state going to abandon those programs, that's the question. Those are the kinds of things you have to consider.

FK: Some of them, the state may have to undertake?

MI: Underwrite and carry on with state funds. Lately, of course, problems like crime, housing, seem to be the big issues.

FK: Can you, is there any kind of big issue that has come up in the Finance Committee that you recall has been needing a lot of funds, any particular one?

MI: Yeah, like the last session, the 1980 session, the question was, because there was a surplus, should we expand that surplus or should we leave a balance. And there was a move to repeal the food and drug tax, there was a question whether the state should rebate the revenues, the surplus revenue, so these were the questions that came up.

FK: You also served on the Agriculture Committee?

MI: Yes.

FK: As vice-chairman you . . .

MI: Well, basically the Agriculture Committee, I think the function there is that, in what way the state can help to keep agriculture a viable industry. And I think the basic programs that the state can enter into are research, you know, developing and assisting the farmers, marketing their goods, controlling production, developing varieties through the University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture, disease control. These are the kinds of things I think the state can help. There is a strong move or there has been a strong move to encourage the farmers to form co-operatives, so that they can obtain better results from their farming industry. Lately there's been a concern about setting a general plan for agriculture in the state bringing all of the resources together, helping in whatever way they can and as a result they established an agriculture coordinating committee in the governor's office to coordinate the various activities of the industry.

FK: Did this also involve land or was it only . . .

MI: Oh yes, land, and then it involves, for instance, low farm loans to help farmers. For instance, recently the sugar industry on the east side of this island was suffering because of the sugar price and the state had to go in and help those farmers, the independent sugar growers to keep them on their sugar cane farms. Loans were

established for them with a low interest rate in order to keep them going until good times may come. Otherwise a lot of the independent farmers were ready to give up. Which meant it was going to have a definite effect on the economy of the other side of the island.

FK: So how directly were you involved with some of the issues that came up in the Agriculture Committee?

MI: Well, I served on the Agriculture Committee. Kona has been an agricultural district before tourism came in and I think farming is still a basic industry. Agriculture is still important in our district so I thought I'd be helping the farmers by serving on the Agriculture Committee and I requested to be the vice-chairman of the committee and I served as the vice-chairman.

FK: How did the farmers that you encountered in Kona feel?

MI: I kept in very close contact with the farmers individually and they have what they call the Farm Bureau here and they have the Extension Service, the Experiment Station here and then of course the coffee industry, the cooperatives. I worked very closely with them and tried to meet their needs, such as in coffee production research.

FK: That must have kept you pretty busy, too, running around besides your work and going to the state legislature, you have to do a lot of researching, too?

MI: Right. And I feel sort of satisfied in trying to do whatever I can for the farmers. I think we've helped them quite a bit.

FK: In other words, if people need help they should ask, otherwise, you don't know that.

MI: Right, right.

FK: Could you talk about the Hawaii Select Committee?

MI: The Hawaii Select Committee is no longer in existence in the legislature but formerly there was a committee. There was a Hawaii Select Committee, there was an Oahu Select Committee, Maui Select and a Kauai Select. Now this committee, the function was to screen all bills that were introduced in the legislature pertaining to the County of Hawaii such as bills of general application and bills appropriating funds for different projects on the Big Island. And this was the function of that particular committee. And then also bills pertaining to the County of Hawaii were referred to the Hawaii Select Committee. Bills that the committee felt should be reported out or should be passed were reported out of the committee and of course bills that the committee felt that were not important were held back. So it was sort of a liaison between the county and the legislature. This is where the people from the county, lobbying for the county came to the Hawaii Select Committee to discuss their requests.

FK: Then you have to be quite aware of everything of the island of Hawaii, then?

MI: Right, right.

FK: In order to be fair.

MI: Mm hmm. But now they don't have that committee anymore. It's handled by various committees, like if it involves water pertaining to the County of Hawaii the bill goes to the land development, Hawaiian Homes Committee. If it pertains to transportation, highways, harbors, it goes to the particular committee. And usually you have representatives in those committees, you know, from the island. So you have representation there.

FK: As far as education goes, can you give an example of how Kona has been helped?

MI: Yes, basically Kona has been helped. You see, as far as the programs go, it covers the whole state. But when it comes down to specifics like capital improvement projects, then this is where I had the advantage serving on the Finance Committee. So if you look at Konawaena, for instance, as an example, they've had improvements there.

FK: The new gym then is . . .

MI: Right, the new gym, additional classroom buildings, the physical ed shower lockerroom facilities, the new playground, the repairs and renovation of the cafeteria and so on. And I'm told by the district office in Hilo that of all the high schools in the island, Konawaena has the best facilities.

FK: It seems in the last few years like a constant state of construction.

MI: Right. And any sizeable project you can't do it in one year, it takes two, three years maybe. The bigger projects take more than that. You can't get the total funding for a big project in one appropriation so it means by incremental appropriations you'll get the total funding for construction.

FK: What would you have been able to do for Kealakehe School, for instance?

MI: Kealakehe has a lot of classrooms added, for instance.

FK: Even while you were in office?

MI: Oh yes, yes. They had the octagonal buildings there and they have the five new classrooms and there is initial appropriation for the physical ed building. That is, the complex for the physical ed program. But with the new school in Kailua, the Kailua Keauhou School, probably a lot of the congestion at Kealakehe may be

relieved. So I don't know whether Kealakehe, as far as classroom facilities go, would be needing additional facilities.

FK: As far as land and water development, you served on that committee, also?

MI: Mm hmm, you see, Kona originally depended on rain water catchment system but they . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MI: Water, yeah, originally, as you know, depended on catchment, each home had its own tank. I would say the average home would have a tank of about 10,000 gallons. Of course, some of them caught their water in drums but an average family had about 10,000 gallons. During the dry spell you really had to be careful of the use of water. Then Kona Inn developed its own system. Being in Kailua, they had to have a water system so what they did was to build two or three huge tanks in Holualoa and they collected the water from the stream. Once in a while the Waiaha Stream would run and when the stream ran they would collect the water from the stream and pipe it down by gravity to Kona Inn. Of course, they had the filtration plant there and by gravity take it down to Kailua. That was the beginning of the water system. Then the Holualoa community negotiated with Kona Inn and I think they got a pipeline installed there and they were able to use that water too. Then the state explored for well water and they dug a well. The first well they dug was along the Kailua Road, that is the Holualoa to Kailua Road, the Hualalai Road.

FK: About how far back are you talking about?

MI: Oh, this was in 19 . . .

FK: In about what period of time?

MI: In the thirties. I think it was in the thirties, no, no, later than that, I think. Anyway, they dug the well along the Hualalai Road and it was not potable because of the salt content. The water was brackish so they gave up that well. Then they had another one dug right close to the Kealakehe School, the present Kealakehe School and this, too, was salty, brackish so they gave that up. Then they went to Kahaluu where the present wells are. They went there and they found good water and this was the beginning of a water system in Kona.

FK: That's ma kai?

MI: That's right, that's the old Keauhou to Kailua Road and so today we have the Kahaluu well and a well in Keei, for the South Kona area.

Then not too long ago, about three years ago, they built the Kahaluu Shaft. See, up to then, the wells at Kahaluu, they had three wells there and a ten-inch pipe that went down to the water table and they had to pump the water up vertically. If one of the pumps gave way then Kona would have been in trouble. Some years back one of the pumps, during the strike, the waterfront strike, one of the wells gave way and they couldn't get the pump here in time so the County Board of Water Supply declared a moratorium on construction. I'm just bringing this up to show that the three pumps that were pumping the water at Kahaluu, if any one of them gave way then Kona would have been in trouble. So they dug a tunnel, an eight-by-eight tunnel, diagonal tunnel to the water head and installed a 20-inch, no, no, I think it's a 24-inch line. And, the pump now is at the bottom of the well, at the water head. And by pumping the water up diagonally at a 30-degree angle, they can pump, three-and-a-half times more water with the same pressure pump and with the same diameter transmission line. So that well, the Kahaluu Well, should, according to the engineers, take care of our water needs for the next decade.

Then, of course, the south end of our district like Papa, Honomalino, and 'Ala'e, do not have water so the state went in and they dug a well at Okoe. They just completed it about a couple of months ago but they hit brackish water. You see, water, to be potable, would have to be about 200 parts salt, that is, salinity count should be about 200 parts per million but this well that they explored in Okoe had about 700 parts per million so it's not potable. If I am in the legislature, exploring for water would be my number one priority in South Kona.

FK: What funding is this?

MI: State funding. And then, of course, in Waimea, South Kohala, water is a basic need because it's a farming country. People in the area are dependent upon the tourism industry and certainly the hotels need water, golf courses need water and so on. The original plan was to build the big dam at Kahakohau, above Waimea but there was such opposition that they gave up the idea of the dam. Instead of a dam they went for wells and they dug a well at Lalamilo and they hit good water there. In 1979, the money appropriated for that well was about \$350,000. Then subsequent to that we appropriated a million dollars.

Now, the question is the transmission line down to Kawaihae and those hotels that are coming up so the county said to the private enterprises that if they wanted water they had to come in and contribute their share. So I understand that the private industry is going to contribute about \$2 million and the county is going to float bonds. I think they have already floated bonds and the private enterprises are going to pay back to the county over a period of time, maybe 20 years or whatever they decide on. So that project is going ahead.

And in Waimea there are two types of systems, one that the county operates and used by private homes and one the state operates to supply water to the farmers in Lalamilo and that's maintained by the state. The water that goes to the private homes is maintained by the County. Somewhat different from over here.

FK: And how about the land development?

MI: Well, land development, here land development involves state land and what they do with the state land. There are a lot of state lands that are leased out to ranchers, for instance. And then there are small parcels where private enterprises lease from the state. These are the problems that the Land Development Committee looks into.

FK: I recently saw in the newspaper about the . . .

MI: Yeah, Kamaoa Point?

FK: Uh huh, were you involved in that?

MI: Definitely, I was involved in that and in fact I worked hard for that so that the state bought recently, that property for \$5.4 million. You see, there's a hui, a group of people who bought that land with the idea of developing that land. It's a nice property and has a beachfront, along the beach there. Then subsequent to them purchasing the land, the state came in and said, "This is a historic site." So they designated that as a state historical site.

Now once the state designates an area as a historical site the private owners cannot go ahead and build unless they get the approval from the state. I understand that there are many historical remains there and so the people could not do anything with the property. They were stuck with this land. It seemed to me very unfair that the state had declared this to be a historical site. So, we appealed to the governor for the state to help the owners of the property by purchasing that property because they were stuck with the property. They couldn't build on it, they can't just keep paying taxes on it, and paying interest on the investment. So the governor agreed to purchase it.

They wanted to exchange Kamaoa Point with some property near the Honokahau Boat Harbor but the governor was very reluctant about exchanging property because he said it would set a precedent. He said, "Rather than that, why don't we buy that property." So in the last session of the legislature, he requested it and we put it in the budget, \$5.4 million for the purchase of that property and the deal went through. So now the state owns the property and I think the state is going to develop that as a historical park. So in the Land Committee, these are the kinds of problems.

There is a move now to buy certain properties in the Napoopoo Bay area. They have already acquired property around the Captain Cook

Monument, that's on the Kohala side of the bay and they want to buy the area you know where the sand beach is?

FK: Yes.

MI: In the back of that and develop that as a historical park. So these are the kinds of problems that the Water Land Committee deals with. And then of course there is a lot of state land that are leased out to ranchers, large stretches of land, and also the committee deals with the Hawaiian Homes projects. For instance, on this side of the island we have Waimea, the Hawaiian Homes property there. They have farms, they have home sites and they have pastoral lands leased out to the Hawaiians. So those are the problems that comes under the jurisdiction of the Water Land Development and Hawaiian Homes Committee.

FK: Seems like you have to do a lot of homework then?

MI: Mm hmm.

FK: Then how did Hawaiian Affairs . . .

MI: Hawaiian Affairs is a separate entity in itself. There has been for quite some time a move to help the Hawaiian people through the federal government and state. The last Constitutional Convention mandated the legislature to establish the Office of Hawaiian Affairs so that's how it came to be. The Constitutional Convention.

FK: So what role did you play in serving on the committee?

MI: I had not much to do in the committee because it was mandated by the Constitutional Convention. And of course I served on the Water Land Hawaiian Homes Committee, that's where that bill came. We established the organization, the functions, the salary, things like that for the OHA [Office of Hawaiian Affairs] program.

FK: And lately we've seen in the news, a lot about energy and you've been pretty involved with energy.

MI: Yes.

FK: Can you tell us more about your role in that?

MI: Yes, on the Energy Committee, I think there were two significant items there where the energy program at the Keahole Point had to be funded and the other one was the move by a plantation on the east side of the island to develop a gasahol program there. So these were the two items of importance and the matter of appropriating the funds for the different projects, at Keahole, the state has appropriated funds for research not only for energy but for aquaculture, too.

FK: How do you feel about all of this, as far as energy?

MI: As far as Ocean Thermal Energy, OTEC is concerned, I don't know if it's going to be in my lifetime, that it's going to be a practical thing where electricity will be provided to the general public. But, it's something that I think is important in case of shortage of fuel, they may have to convert to this kind of project, and projects such as wind, heat, you know, solar energy. In Kohala, they're experimenting with wind energy there. Like on Oahu, Hawaiian Electric is spending quite a bit of money to develop wind energy producing project. And then of course, geothermal, I think that's going to become a reality soon in Puna.

But as far as Ocean Thermal Energy is concerned, OTEC, conversion of the cold water and the warm water to develop energy, I don't know if that's going to be practical or not. But it is possible, OTEC has proven that they can produce electricity. So what the project at Keahole Point will do is to further research. I think the main project is going to be centered around how they can find material that will not rust or corrode because of the salt water. And this is, I think, one of the key problems that they have to solve in the OTEC program.

FK: I understand that you're also involved in Ocean and Marine Resources?

MI: Yeah, you know the fishing industry has been sort of dormant for a number of years and we're surrounded by ocean. There is a definite awakening that the fishing industry can become an important industry in the state. So not too long ago the legislature, that is the House, established the Ocean and Marine Resources Committee. Its function is to look into the fishery industry.

FK: Okay, you were on that committee?

MI: Yes, I served on that committee and there's all kinds of experiments and research going on. One is the aku bait research, then the prawn development which, I think, is now an established industry on Oahu and milk fish and catfish development. Then this past year, we appropriated funds for the fish aggregating buoys. There were 26 of them which were set throughout the state. In Kona we have one, two, three, one outside of Kawaihae, one outside of Kailua and one outside of Miloli'i. The idea of these buoys is to, have a floating buoy which is anchored to an anchor and they have a net in the water and this attracts the small fish. And by attracting the small fish the bigger fish will come for the smaller fish. And they have found out that it's very successful. In the last session of the legislature I know that I was instrumental in making the appropriation for the buoys throughout the state, the 26 buoys.

FK: That's supposed to attract the fish and the fishermen will go there?

MI: Right, they will go around the buoys and fish.

FK: You might get traffic jams.

MI: Oh yes, there are quite a few of them that go there, around the buoy to fish. The one outside of Kailua hasn't been too successful. What the fishermen tell me is that it's placed in the wrong place. Some say it should go further out and further south but I don't know what the real problem is there. But the one outside Miloli'i has been very successful.

FK: As far as fishing in Kona goes, it's known all around the world as . . .

MI: Yes, it's because of the calm waters and the formation of the ocean bottom, I think we have good fishing grounds. And then we also established, what is called a bigger boat loan fund but they did not have funds for the smaller boats, you see? So when was it, four years ago, five years ago, I introduced the bill to establish a small boat loan and maintenance fund, purchase and maintenance fund so quite a few people have bought small boats through this loan.

FK: So they would purchase the boat and the fish would pay back the loan?

MI: Right, right. And this of course, we hope will encourage people to buy boats so that they can go fishing and that would develop the fishing industry.

FK: Then in the, say the past ten years, have you noticed or do you think there's been a significant growth in the fishing industry then?

MI: Yeah, I think so, I think Kona has produced quite a bit of supply of the fishing needs in the state. In fact, a lot of our fish that are caught here are sent to the mainland and I was talking to a lady who visited her friend in Iowa. And she said she went to the market and she looked and there was ahi, sashimi so she asked where the ahi came from and the man said it was from Honaunau, from Kona.

FK: Iowa, huh?

MI: So much of our fish goes to the mainland.

FK: And there are two others [committees], Social Services . . .

MI: That one was quite a number of years, I didn't serve on that Social Services Committee for quite some time. That was primarily, you know, the Social Services program, who, how much, you know, that kind of questions involved.

FK: How about Ecology and Environment?

MI: The Ecology and Environment Committee has not been too active, so to speak. I know one of the questions came up was whether they should ban the plastic containers.

FK: Ban, how do you mean?

MI: You know, they have plastic containers for orange juice and things like that, whether they should prohibit use of plastic containers. And then of course the beer cans, soda cans, normally you'd pull off the cap, the state said no. It would have to be the kind that's not detachable. And the idea there was that the detachable covers, you throw those away and environmentally it would be littering, you know. So they said no, and they gave the industry a certain amount of time, so now you notice all cans, it's not detachable.

FK: As far as having been on all these committees, how do you feel as far as Kona, or what you brought back to Kona?

MI: I think Kona has had it's share of funding.

FK: As far as the state is concerned?

MI: As far as the state, in comparison to other areas in the state, population-wise, area-wise, I think we've had more than our share of support from the state.

FK: Which would mean, I suppose, in the legislature you would have to do your own form of lobbying, too?

MI: Yes, you'd have to go see the different people, you have to go see the different departments, what they were going to recommend, point out to them the needs of our community so that they can make the request in their program, as they set up their program. They set up priorities so that all projects would have high priority in their overall state-wide projects, you see. So it involves a lot of leg work. Then you have to see the committee people, the chairman, then you're in the Finance Committee, make sure that the funding is included in the budget and stays in the budget. And then after it's in the budget, after the budget is passed you have to go and see the governor to release the funds for that project. So it requires a lot of leg work and you just can't do it overnight. It takes time.

FK: How do you feel as far as attitude goes, I know that some legislators are more forceful than maybe, deal in a nicer level than these . . .

MI: Well, there are many approaches. You have, for instance, 51 members in the House, you have 51 personalities, each one has his own way of approaching. Some are very vocal, some are not.

- FK: For yourself, did you find any method more effective as far as your approach?
- MI: Yes, in my case, I've quietly approached people, in a quiet manner asking their support instead of being very vocal about it.
- FK: You mean, not demanding but pointing out the need.
- MI: Right, right, the need, pointing out the need and asking them for their support. And it's been, I think, successful.
- FK: Sounds like it, from the record, anyway.
- MI: Right, right. And the various departments, going to the departments asking for their help and you find that people are very nice. People are helpful if you approach them in a proper way and point out to them the need, they are supportive, I think.
- FK: It seems as though you must have to look for a well of initiative or energy within yourself to . . .
- MI: Yeah, well, it requires a lot of work and your personal relations with them, you know, will have to be such that there's good rapport, good relationship so that they will support you. You don't go there to fight them, you got to be dependable, honest.
- FK: We've heard about your record, anyway, as far as . . .
- MI: Yeah, yeah, so I think, of course, there's no end to accomplishments but personally I think I'm satisfied. I can still hold my chin up and say, "Well, I've done the best I could." No regrets as far as that's concerned.
- FK: How do you feel about not serving this time?
- MI: It feels sort of, uh, miss the activities, but gradually, I guess, you know after you've served for 48 years in government service I'm beginning to feel maybe I deserve a little rest. I deserve a little time of my own doing the things I want to do without any pressures because if you're in office there's a lot of pressure. You're always thinking, you're concerned, what can be done, or what did I do? Or what can I do or what did I do wrong. You're unconsciously thinking about these things and now, no concerns, no worries.
- FK: How would you evaluate the effect of the changes in your constituents, as far as having an effect on your election?
- MI: Well, as you know, we are one of the areas that have had the largest percentage-wise growth in vote in the state and it's not growth of the locals, so to speak. It's been growth, people coming from outside, from away. More particularly the Mainland and they have different philosophies, they have different approaches to things and it's not like what it used to be, entirely different. The

complexion of the constituency has changed quite a bit. Yeah, definitely.

FK: So you think that was the reason for your not having won?

MI: That, I think basically was the main reason.

FK: So would that mean that maybe these newcomers did not know you?

MI: Right, right, they did not know me.

FK: Or maybe they didn't know or didn't realize maybe all the needs of Kona?

MI: Mm hmm, I think so, yeah.

FK: Had you been elected, what did you hope to accomplish this next term?

MI: I think I would have asked for a slot in the Finance Committee and I think the important function of the Finance Committee is to meet the needs of the various areas, different people with different interests and meet their needs and at the same time try to balance the budget. And with the kind of surplus they are having, of course, they have to be very careful not to spend the monies in such a way that later on by establishing new programs you're going to be stuck when the revenues are not so good. These are the kinds, I think, overall importance the Finance Committee has. Then, of course, we have a lot of programs that we have started. Speaking about our district, Kona and Waimea, there are a lot of projects that we have started and if I had gone down I would pursue, push for an early completion of these projects.

FK: In reflecting on your life in Kona and working in the state legislature you've been in contact with many people, all kinds of people, how do you feel about your life, to this date then, in respect to people?

MI: I didn't get that, what?

FK: How do you feel about having met all these different kinds of people?

MI: Oh, it's been a wonderful experience for me and I really enjoyed it. And I always tell my wife that, "You know, we're rich people, not in material things but we've come to know more people, we've established new friends, we've found new friends."

And the satisfaction that you get that you have done something anyway, whatever little you accomplished for the people, these are the richness I think that you get from public life and overall I'm very satisfied with my life, so to speak. And people have been awfully nice to me in Kona, I love the district, I was born and raised here and I hope to die here. Yes, people have been awfully

nice to me and I really think that I'm a rich man, insofar as non-material things are concerned.

FK: While you were serving in the state legislature, is there anything that stands out as having been a terrible disappointment to you as far as not having accomplished certain goals?

MI: Well, there's no specific thing but there's always need for improvement. I don't care where, you have something that you can always improve on but I think we've met our needs, that is, urgent needs in our district.

FK: As far as your family goes, you have your daughter here in Kona?

MI: Right, two of them here in Kona and one is in Hilo.

FK: How many grandchildren do you have?

MI: I have five grandchildren, yeah.

FK: Here in the community, then, I suppose you met people of all the different ethnic groups and have had to work with everyone.

MI: Yes, yes.

FK: And as far as your campaign has been conducted in the past, how was it that you were able to go out and meet all these people and pull them together?

MI: Well, to begin with we have an organization by areas, you know. And in each area we have a captain, we have workers in each district and during the campaign, of course, they go out and talk to people, pass out brochures and you meet because you have constantly calls from the constituents about various problems. Some are interested, there are so many different interests that they have, questions that they have so you're constantly being called and this is how, I guess, you meet the people. And then you have clubs, organizations, that have their projects, their interests.

FK: Like the Senior Citizens Club?

MI: Right, and the different organizations in Kona have their problems. Many of them come to me for advice, for support, businesses have their concerns in support or against certain bills that are introduced so you try to see what you can do for them and naturally the schools have their problems. They need support, so you meet all kinds of people. You meet people who are interested in education, people who have their problems in health, transportation, in social services, you know. So all kinds of people you meet, all kinds of problems. As far as being a legislator, it's a learning process right through. It never ends and for you to know every detail of all of the functions of the state projects, in the state, you know, it's a constant learning process, it never ends.

FK: One of the big problems in Kona now, depending on which way you look at it, is land development, how do you feel about this?

MI: It's come to a point where . . .

FK: As far as controls maybe?

MI: Yeah, housing for instance, it's not affordable to many, many people, particularly the younger people but in our system of free enterprise it's going to be awfully difficult to control it. We have mechanisms whereby you can control these things to a certain extent. For instance, we have the Land Use Commission, we have the Planning Commission, we have the requirement for environmental impact statements, we have the shoreline control, you know, and we have building codes for the county. Certain restrictions and we have the general plan, the county's general plan for the district. So these are the mechanisms that help to develop in the right direction but . . .

FK: Well, lately people, seems like the feeling of many people, especially the oldtimers have sort of a feeling of being lost or confused because things seem to be happening too quickly.

MI: Well, that's it, you see, like the developments that are coming up. They go through all of this process before they develop now. To what extent you're going to put the clamps on them, that's the question, yeah? And as I said, under the free enterprise system it would be awfully difficult to control when individuals have their own property rights and all of that.

FK: Well, it seems like much of the agricultural land is being rezoned also.

MI: Yes, yes.

FK: Many farmers are not too happy about that.

MI: Well, this is where we have the Land Use Commission where they have to hold public hearings and people can come and testify who are against, let's say, converting or rezoning agricultural land to other purposes. But you'll find at these public hearings, I've gone to many public hearings as a member of committees or as an observer but you find very few people turn out at these meetings.

FK: Do you think that it might serve to have a drive for more public awareness?

MI: Definitely, more public participation.

FK: Maybe people don't quite know about it or understand what the ramifications are?

MI: Right, and then, too, many of them are not concerned, they are not interested.

FK: Some of them are concerned when they talk about it but they . . .

MI: Yeah, when they talk about it but they don't act, you know, go to these meetings. And if there is a strong voice against, let's say, rezoning a certain piece of land for something else and there is strong opposition the agencies listen but as I said, there's very little participation.

END OF SIDE TWO

SIDE ONE; TAPE NO. 9-49-3-81

FK: Mr. Inaba, in your work in the state legislature, did you have much cause to travel outside of Hawaii?

MI: Yes, there were quite a few instances that we travelled with different committees, Finance Committee, Agricultural Committee and visited projects in different countries, different programs in different countries.

FK: Can you give a couple of examples?

MI: Yes, for example, with the Agricultural Committee we went to Korea, basically to look at their cooperative movement. It's the same thing in Thailand, Kuala Lumpur and in New Zealand and in the Philippines, look at the cooperative movement. Then of course, we went to different countries to look at their programs, how they operate the farming industry. With the Finance Committee we went to see how they operate the transportation system, particularly in Japan, then we went to different countries to observe their financial set up, organizations, so forth. Went to Japan once to study their, what the government does in terms of the disadvantaged or disabled people, what kind of programs they have for them. We went to Japan once to study their police system, the organization of the police system and all kinds of programs. Then we went to Japan also to look at the international trade programs.

FK: As far as the police system in Japan, how do you find it the most different from here?

MI: The police system, yes, they're very well organized. This question we posed to the Chief of Police in Tokyo, for instance, how come they do not have as much crime in Tokyo? He says, "Well, basically the police officers there are assigned to their beats in a particular area in the city and the police makes it a point to know every home in his beat, how many children there are, who they are and they're very strict, also." For instance, if you get into an accident because of being under the influence of liquor your license is taken away, no two ways about it. They are well organized and their traffic system is well organized, centralized, all computerized, they're well organized. And, of course, there is no getting away there their railway system is the system that is

used throughout the country from prefecture to prefecture and this transportation system is very well organized. They are far ahead from what we have here.

FK: Now that you're, I guess, working at the Great Hawaiian, every day, I noticed, what do you do with your other time?

MI: Well . . .

FK: Any hobbies that you follow?

MI: Yes, I love my fishing, that's my number one hobby and of course lately it's been, the sea has been rough but whenever I can, I do go fishing and that's about it now, for the time being. I don't golf.

FK: What about politics?

MI: Well, I'm going to lay low for a little while and get my bearings and then I'll be concerned about our district, our state, our educational system, I'll be much concerned about them. The economic growth of our district, along with that the different problems that present itself.

FK: Do you see a need for more of the local people to be more aware of certain issues?

MI: Definitely.

FK: Or for someone to lead them maybe, or help them to become more aware?

MI: Yes, I think regardless of what group it is, I think they should become more aware of government, it's programs, it's projects, and operations. They should be concerned but as a whole, people are not, they do not take an active interest or part in the affairs of government and I think the people should.

FK: How about for the young people in the future, in Kona, what do you see for them?

MI: Well, you know, as far as job opportunities go, there are not too many for, let's say, professional people. So I think many of them will be moving out, go elsewhere, of course, as far as labor, non-professional jobs go, there may be opportunities here. But you never can tell, we might grow to such a point where the need for professionals will increase and there may be opportunities here.

FK: Well thank you very much, Mr. Inaba, it's been very interesting.

MI: Okay, I hope I have been able to answer your questions.

FK: Yes. We would like to talk to you more but (laughs), thank you.

MI: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

A SOCIAL HISTORY OF KONA

Volume I

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